



THE PURPLE CASTLE

A TWISTED RETELLING
OF SNOW WHITE

QUINN SLATER

THE PURPLE CASTLE

by Quinn Slater

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Escaping the tumultuous life with her abusive husband, Zareena vanishes into the dark of night where she finds an enchanted land of mystical and magical creatures in the woods behind her home.

But as magical as the land seems, a darkness lies in wait—a witch who desires to sit on the same throne Zareena has been destined to occupy. In her quest to the throne and to wash away the curse the witch has cast upon both *Legendary* and its king, Zareena must also face her own demons of sexual desire and sexual conquest.

The question for Zareena quickly becomes one of strength. Can she accept her sexual awakening while also freeing *Legendary* from its 1,000-year curse?

Quinn Slater explores the world of erotic yearning and fantasy in a retelling of a classical fairytale that explores one woman's search for herself.

CHAPTER ONE

The Dryads

Zareenna glanced back at her house and sighed. She hated being there. Hated the memories and the man sleeping in her bed on the second floor. He deserved what she was about to do. It had been a long time coming. All she needed was encouragement.

Her father had said, “If a man ever raises a hand to you, you let me know, and I’ll raise a hand to him.”

But she didn’t want that. Her father was a good man and a good father. He didn’t need the trouble that would follow him after beating up her husband. No one needed that trouble. Not even her, anymore. Her father also taught her that women were to be loved not harmed. She had been harmed for way too long.

She, like so many others, made all the excuses. Blamed herself. Blamed the booze. Blamed his stressful job. But none of these things were a good excuse to hit her. So now was the time. He would wake up about two in the morning, disoriented, wondering where the hell he was. Then he’d realize it was early Saturday morning and that he was in their bed. Except she wouldn’t be there this time. There would be no rape. No beating. Luckily, they had no kids for him to beat. If they’d had kids, the kids would be leaving with her.

The thought of him making his own breakfast made her smile. His eggs would be covered in eggshells, and his coffee would be burnt or taste like crap. The thought of him washing his own clothes made her laugh. Maybe the guys at the gym would get a laugh when he walked in wearing pink socks. Maybe one of those big, hulking guys would beat the hell out of him. There would be a heartier laugh when he showed up at work in a shrunken shirt, pants, or sweater. In the darkness, with her back to the house, she raised her hand and then lowered all her fingers except the middle. “Fuck you,” she said, and she took a deep breath of the fresh evening air.

She stood at the edge of the woods behind the house and glanced back again. The white stucco needed a good cleaning. No longer her problem. The yard needed to be mowed, and the plants needed to be trimmed before fall took to the gloomy skies next month. But that was no longer her problem either. Zareenna allowed a smile to creep across her lips. So many things were no longer her problem. She felt giddy and ready for a new beginning.

She felt bad that on Monday morning the hospital would wonder where their best trauma nurse had disappeared to. Of course, there would be a search. Of course, he would be questioned and accused. This made her smile if only a little. She would miss the job. Not to mention all her co-workers. She also felt bad for her father, the man who treated her with unwavering respect. She was his grown little girl.

Tears built around the corners of her eyes, but she managed another deep breath to calm her nerves. No more tears, she told herself. No more of him. Her past ended right now.

Zareenna crossed the imaginary line between the grass in her back yard and the woods lining their property—no longer her property. The air seemed to cool and make breathing easier. Her skin tingled as if every pore had been cleaned relentlessly. Her hair turned satin-soft, and the few wrinkles on the backs of her hands disappeared. Her nails sparkled, and the white tips glowed. She marveled at the changes in her body. Why had she not ventured out here sooner?

She refused to look back at what was. Humanity was no longer her race. She was free. Cleansed beyond her wildest dreams. And then, for no reason she could find in her mind, a mind that was as clear as it had ever been, she removed every piece of clothing.

She was neither cold nor hot and felt perfectly comfortable. She imagined this must have been how Eve felt upon her creation. “Free,” she said into the still, beautiful evening. As she looked forward, she gasped at the clarity of her vision. She could see the tiniest knot in a tree at least a hundred yards away. The forest was full of pines, firs, oaks and birches. A small stream, shiny and gurgling, stretched into the night away from the property that was once hers. She now felt a kinship to all before her. It belonged to her more than anything ever had in her life.

Zareenna considered retrieving the flashlight from the backpack that lay at her feet but decided the full, silvery moon provided more than enough light for her to see the way. The way to what she had no idea. But the way to nothing was certainly a better way than the way to what she had.

The pack had her essentials: soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrush, three changes of clothes—though they would certainly be wrinkled. She had a week’s worth of food: granola, trail mix, a variety of nuts and peanut butter. And although she only had one bottle of water, she had purchased a small water filter she could use to refill the bottle from the streams coming down out of the mountains. As far as she knew she had thought of everything. But then she looked at the pack once more, catching a glimpse of her naked body as she looked down. She needed none of the things in her pack. Somehow, some way, everything she needed would be provided to her. She knew not by who or what but felt secure just knowing. Nature would provide for its children.

She nudged the pack. Maybe she should have brought a picture or two. But pictures had memories, and memories had

consequences both good and bad. He needed to be erased from her memory. She needed the strength to do exactly that. She looked down at her left hand and realized a memory had followed her into the woods. “No more,” she whispered.

Zareena wiggled her wedding and engagement rings from her finger and held them in her hand. The gold no longer shined. The diamond no longer sparkled. Neither had an ounce of love remaining. “No more,” she whispered again and threw both rings into the forest.

She continued forward with steady steps, relaxed breathing, and a determination that life was about to change for the better. Her past of minutes ago had turned into a distant memory.

She’d not shared her plans with anyone, or even mentioned the calling of the forest at night while she lay in bed praying for help. Too many nights she ventured downstairs and cried into her hands while sitting on the couch in the living room.

The calls in the night were from tiny voices. Faint and distant. At first, she thought it was nothing more than a trick of the wind. But then things changed. Despite the distant calls, the voices eventually became clearer. And then, just last week, animals appeared around the perimeter of the property. They watched her with child-like interest. None ever becoming spooked and running off.

Then, one Sunday morning, *they* appeared, barely hiding in the brush. Short in stature, no more than a foot tall, eyes bright but piercing, they called to her with heavenly voices. “Zareenna.” A chorus of angels. “Zareenna.”

Sure that it was all related to the stress in her life, Zareenna ignored what she only believed to be her imagination trying to free her mind from life’s trials. But things changed last evening when one of the small creatures fluttered from the forest, blue as the ocean and naked as a newborn child. The tiny creature, though human in form, had large eyes, full but tight lips, ears that stretched several inches to a point, and a set of wings that swirled the air around it.

Zareenna opened her hand to the creature, and the tiny nymph floated forward, landing in the center of her palm, weighing almost nothing.

“My name is Helena,” the nymph said. Her voice squeaked, but the sound was music to Zareenna’s ears. “We’ve been watching you for quite some time.”

At that moment, several other tiny creatures fluttered from the forest, all hovering around the mesmerized Zareenna.

“We’re the dryads, nymphs of the woods. We will be your guides to the other side.” Helena and the other dryads moved to the side, clearing the way for Zareenna’s adventure.

Zareenna, scared though still mesmerized, said, “Tomorrow evening. Tomorrow evening I will come to you. I will trust and follow.”

Helena and the other dryads fluttered around, filling the space in front of Zareenna. “We will meet you in the woods when the sun has dropped behind the mountains.” She held out her arms. “The dryads will be your protector.”

Zareenna walked away last night sure she would never return to the woods. Sure that her life would continue the way it had for too many years. But then her fear turned to hope, and her hope turned to courage. Courage brought her back to where she stood.

A hundred yards into the forest, the noises began. At first there was a weird bird sound. Just one bird. Then the forest filled with sounds that she’d never heard in the evenings, when she sat out on her porch, dreaming of the possibilities for her life. Dreaming that someday the universe would save her from a life she often considered ending.

Any other time noises in the dark would have her scurrying to cower in the corner. But then the colorful lights appeared in the distance. Too bright to see anything other than the lights, Zareenna shuffled forward. Drawn not just by the lights, but also by the scent of vanilla. And then lavender. And then cinnamon. Her senses filled with fragrances that made her sway in delight. She felt her mind shifting from anxiety, depression, and no will to live to joy, exhilaration and excitement.

“Helena?” she called.

Helena and the other dryads dimmed their glowing bodies and fluttered forward. “Zareenna,” Helena said happily. “We’re glad you came.” The dryads parted, making a way for Zareenna to pass. “We welcome you to our home. Please come.”

Naked and all inhibitions tossed into the night, Zareenna moved forward not once thinking about what stayed behind. The path in front of her was brilliantly clear, the plants parting as she moved, almost if bowing to her naked form. She ran her hand across a beautiful fern, and her fingers tingled, energized by the fern’s lively energy. She knew then her life was about to change.

“Where’s your home?” Zareenna asked. She glanced down and noticed that although she was walking forward, her feet never touched the ground. She stopped and raised her left foot, disbelief filling her soul. A dozen dryads clung tightly to the bottom of her foot, carrying her.

“The dryads are here to serve you on your quest,” Helena said. The nymph flapped her wings excitedly.

Zareenna looked up from her foot. “My quest?”

Helena waved her hand toward the path the group followed, and the trees gracefully bent away from the path, revealing magnificent mountains far to the north, and upon the most distant mountain sat a large purple castle. “It is the place you seek. We will help to find what you seek.”

Zareenna shook her head. “I don’t understand. All that I seek is happiness. To be loved and cherished.”

The dryads continued moving Zareena's feet forward, stopping in an open area heavily surrounded by trees. A small building sat in the middle, a gentle fire blazing inside, the silhouette of flames licking the walls. The cottage looked like a place she could live forever.

"He that you seek lives in the purple castle."

"He?" Zareena questioned. She again scanned the small village, mesmerized by the fantastical plants and tiny creatures.

"Arcturus, ruler of all that you see. He is our king. The lover of us all. And in return, we love him." Helena motioned at a stump near the small building. "Please have a seat, and we will explain."

Zareena crossed the open area and took a seat, facing Helena. Although she crossed her legs, she felt no shame for her nakedness. Several of the female dryads fluttered upward, surrounding her head. Zareena looked to the left and then the right.

"What are they doing?"

"Preparing you," Helena replied softly.

The female dryads fluttered around her hair, gently grabbing the long strands.

Zareena watched from the corners of her eyes as the small creatures began to meticulously braid her brunette locks. "Preparing me for what?"

Helena pointed toward the purple castle again. "For our king, of course. He will love you better than anyone. He will treat you as he has treated us."

"I..." Zareena began but then held her words. A castle? A king? She looked toward the castle again and this time smiled. When she turned to Helena, she saw her own face in a mirror, Helena fluttering behind the mirror, struggling to hold it in the air. She took the mirror and turned her head, marveling at the braids the dryads had fixed into a bun. For the first time in years she felt pretty. No, she felt beautiful. She lowered the mirror, studying her neck, and then breasts, stomach, the patch of hair between her legs, her milky-white thighs and then the rest of her legs. Her body had changed since entering the woods. With the purple castle looking down on her from afar, she felt as if she'd walked into her own fairy tale.

Zareena stood and walked around the dryads' home, admiring the flowers that seemed to turn and watch her as she passed by. The ground beneath her feet seemed to breathe life into her body. Everything about the dryads exuded an unstoppable energy.

Zareena stopped. Her eyes grew wide. All around her, the male dryads were mounting a female dryad. Small bodies gyrated and glowed. Hips thrust and wings fluttered.

She moved to her knees and studied two dryads in the throes of love making. The male dryad had the female on her stomach, the female pushing her small ass back toward the male's driving hips. The male's body glowed brightly, and the female's wings fluttered. Zareena glanced to the right, where a female Dryad was perched atop a male, her wings helping her control the male beneath her.

Zareena sat on the ground and crossed her legs before scooting closer to the first couple she had been admiring. Helena floated closer and took a seat on Zareena's bare shoulder.

"Watch his body," Helena whispered.

With her eyes still trained on the dryads, Zareena nodded and leaned closer. "He's becoming transparent. What's happening to him?"

"Watch closer," Helena replied. "Watch the female."

The dryads' bodies were not much different than those of humans. Zareena watched, amazed, as the female's wings stretched back and engulfed the male behind her. Though the wings became transparent, much like the male dryad, Zareena could still see the milky liquid surging from the male's body, emptying into the female. And as the fluorescent cream filled the dryad, she began to sing. In fact, every female around Zareena sang an angelic song as their male counterparts released into them.

"But what about you?" Zareena asked.

Helena smiled and fluttered into the air. "Hold out your hand."

Zareena did as the small nymph requested. Her heart beat faster and her breathing hastened.

Helena landed softly onto Zareena's hand and let her wings relax away from her sides. She pursed her lips and sang as beautiful as anything nature had ever created.

In moments, a second dryad—male—appeared from the woods, singing a similar song. He landed on Zareena's hand but ignored the human female. Instead, he gazed down at the exposed Helena. "My queen," he said, and gently lifted from Zareena's hand.

The dryad took to the air again, his wings disturbing the still air, his mighty body flexing and growing. He dropped to Zareena's hand again and stood at Helena's feet. He opened his mouth, and Zareena watched with delight as the creature's tongue unraveled. She felt enlivened, trying desperately to ignore the sexual need growing between her legs.

The tip of the dryad's tongue was shaped liked that of a snake, so when the tips of his tongue floated between Helena's legs, he was able to open her to his want.

Zareena moved her hand closer to her face, admiring the dryad's body. His phallus—that's what it had to be because it

looked exactly like a human phallus—grew to half his body size, which meant that it would be impossible for him to fit inside his female counterpart.

“Is he going to hurt you?” Zareena asked. “I will stop him if you like.”

Before Helena could answer, the entire village of dryads formed a circle around Zareena and the two dryads resting on the palm of her hand. Helena smiled at the male dryad and flapped her wings, signaling for the male to continue.

The male dryad fell forward, his wings flapping so that he did not crush Helena.

Helena raised her legs and as her partner entered her, she wrapped her legs around his waist, using her heels against his lower back to drive him deeper.

The male dryad pushed into Helena, his body glowing, his long phallus reaching deep inside her, stopping briefly before pulling out and driving back inside his lover. They continued for several minutes, their stamina that of a marathon runner.

Zareena’s body tensed, blood rushing to her brain so fast she felt dizzy. Her crotch tingled and turned wet, the sensation something she’d not felt in years. The last time she came she was alone, her hand doing the work her husband could never do. She glanced between her legs. The swath of dark hair shimmered beneath her building wetness. She looked back at the dryads making love on her palm, their bodies practically singing with a movement that seemed ethereal.

Watching the dryad fill Helena, her eyes closed, her face marked by joyfulness, Zareena wanted to push to her feet and sprint through the forest to find a bed of grass, something smooth and inviting. A place where, in private, she could meet the need racing through her body. She vigorously fought the desire to move her free hand between her legs. Again, she thought about leaving, but she found it impossible to take her eyes from the scene playing out on her palm.

Helena closed her wings around the male dryad and gracefully, need-fully, accepted his offering, the milking creating a buzz throughout the other dryads. It was as if the entire dryad community was involved in the lovemaking.

The chorus of approval from the other dryads filled the evening. Hundreds darted into the air, dancing and performing acrobatics Zareena had never seen before. Their glowing bodies created colorful streaks across the night sky like speeding lightning bugs.

The male dryad shot from her palm and joined the others that had fluttered into the evening, celebrating all they had done and experienced.

“Zareena, are you okay?” Helena asked.

No. No she wasn’t okay. She was more than okay. Her eyes were opened to impossibilities that had become possibilities. She stood and gently bit into her bottom lip, the moistness between her legs exhilarating. She had never been a part of anything so beautiful and seductive. “That was incredible,” she said. “He did not hurt you?”

Helena shook her head and moved into the air. “I see that you enjoyed it very much.”

Zareena glanced down again. Her nipples had grown hard with desire. She had the urge to squeeze the dark, erect tips. She had the urge to swipe her hand between her legs. She had the urge to be pleased by a dryad.

“You can experience what we experience,” Helena said. “We can give you everything that we have before your quest to the purple castle.”

“You keep saying my quest to the purple castle. You think that’s why I’ve come here?” Zareena followed Helena as she floated toward the cottage. She looked around again. The dryads spent and relaxing.

Helena stopped at the doorway and turned. “Our paths are not always clearly marked, Zareena. We know that what you seek you will find in the purple castle.”

Zareena noticed Helena’s eyes shift toward the ground. She gently placed her index finger beneath Helena’s chin and raised her head. “There’s more. Something you’re not telling me. I left my home to find happiness. I had no other plan. No other purpose than to run away.”

Helena nodded. “Sometimes the road to happiness is paved with things we cannot control.” She motioned toward the path that led north, in the direction of the castle. “There are several lands that you must pass through. Places the dryads simply cannot go. All the creatures of these lands stay where they belong. You will be alone, but you will find what you are looking for.”

“There are dangers along the path,” Zareena said. “That’s what you’re worried about?”

Helena nodded. “Not all lands are bad, but all the lands *can* be bad.” She entered the small structure and rested on the vine of a plant that covered the far wall. The fire in the corner of the room faintly glowed against the walls. “You will stay here two nights. On the third day we will show you the path to Unicorn Waterfall, a land home to the unicorns.”

Zareena started to question the existence of unicorns. She pushed away such a notion. “What’s to fear? Though they are a myth from where I came, they have always been considered gentle creatures. Our world cherishes the beasts.”

“Narus is a gentle unicorn, when he wants to be. But do not be drawn in by his magic. He is the main unicorn stud for a reason. If he offers you a ride, you must say no. In *that* land you must walk, or fear being lost to their magic.” Helena flapped into the air. “In the morning, when the dew is fresh and shimmering, we must finish your preparation. The king will want you to be not only beautiful but also prompt. Therefore, you must be weary of Narus. He will lead you astray.”

“There are other dangers, Helena?” Zareena sat on the bed in the middle of the room. The warmth from the waning fire

soothed her skin. "Tell me of the others."

Helena landed on the foot of the bed. "After Unicorn Waterfall is the land of the satyrs. The satyrs are goat-like men that inhabit the mountains and valley that you must pass through. They've never harmed anyone who stays on the path." Her face grew serious. "They are tricksters. They will do what they can to draw you from your way. Beware, Zareena. The leader is a satyr named Tinum. He's the biggest trickster of all. He, like Narus, is a seducer of females and will want you in ways you may not like."

Zareena laid back on the bed and rested her head on a pillow so soft she thought it invisible. She considered the path she must take. Her father had once said, "A body in motion is a body always moving forward." There was no back for her. There was no left or right. Only forward. She thought of the king who lived in the purple castle. A man of great royalty must also be a man of great need. But what needs would such a man have? There could only be one.

"There are other dangers lurking?" Zareena asked. "Surely nothing could be as great a danger as the satyrs?"

"You must then pass through the swamps of the ogres, large grotesque creatures that keep to themselves. Their leader, Korlor, is a beast like no other." Helena smiled shyly. Finally, you will then pass through the land of elves, beings that have been greatly exaggerated by your kind," Helena said.

"They are beautiful creatures," Zareena replied. "Gentle and caring."

"You must not think this way of any creature you find between here and the purple castle. Be cautious, Zareena. Do not let your senses fail you."

"Wait, where are you going?" Zareena asked as Helena fluttered toward the door. She found the female nymph wildly attractive, remembering her body accepting the male dryad, urging his every movement.

"The dryads rest before the dew begins to fall. You must rest too."

Zareena reached out and offered her hand. Helena zipped over and gently landed on Zareena's palm.

"Thank you for all that you and the dryads have done for me." Zareena brought Helena forward and placed her lips against Helena's body. She kissed the small creature. Her lips tingled from the touch.

Helena glowed, and her wings swirled the air. "You will always be a daughter of the dryads," Helena said. She turned away and jumped from Zareena's hand. "May you see the king in your dreams tonight." Helena zipped from the room, the air swirling in her wake.

Zareena stared at the ceiling, struggling to understand all that had happened since leaving her home. The dryads were her protectors for now. But this journey, a quest Helena had said, was something unexpected. When she left home, she had no expectations except freedom from what was. Who was this king who thought so highly of her? And why was he waiting on her? Were there not others more suitable? He would surely be disappointed when she arrived.

She closed her eyes and breathed deeply. The lavender plants filling the room easing her into sleep. For the first time in as long as she could remember, Zareena dreamed of great things. Magnificent colors. Kings and unicorns. Of satyrs and ogres. Of impossible lands and beings. She also dreamed of dryads and what it must be like to be with the one who had pleased Helena.

Zareena woke in a start. She looked around the strange room and suddenly remembered. The woods and then the small creatures and then, well, an epic orgy. It had all been real. Had she really left her home and walked through the woods naked? Yes! She lay her head down again and smiled. When she turned her head to the right, she could just make out dawn rising over the horizon. She could also see the newly formed dew clinging to plant leaves, branches, and flower petals. Dozens of dryads flitted around, collecting the morning dew.

She turned on her side and tucked her hands beneath her cheek. The dryads were beautiful, kind creatures. She made the right choice by leaving the other world. Her new beginning started off not as she imagined but started off well, nonetheless.

She heard the fluttering of wings and turned toward the doorway where a hoard of dryads gathered. One of the small creatures zipped forward, and Zareena immediately recognized the male dryad.

"You are the one who belongs to Helena," Zareena said, still lying back on the pillow. She looked at the other dryads and noticed each of them were male. "You are here to see me?"

"My name is Simian," the dryad said. "We are here for your cleansing."

Zareena glanced again at the throng of male dryads, this time noticing the sparkling, wobbling balls in each hand. "Dew drops?" she asked.

"It is what we use to cleanse ourselves. It's how we renew each morning. It is our way."

Zareena stared at the male dryad for a few moments. She remembered how he made love to Helena. How his body pulsed, shimmered, and became transparent as he made his offering to her. She glanced below his waist, where his small erection seemed to spark something inside her. Again, she stared at the other males, seeing the hundreds of small erections.

"The cleansing is up to you," Simian said. "You won't be harmed in the land of dryads."

Zareena nodded. It had been years since she'd had a massage, and the thought of being bathed by someone else made her feel like a queen. She pushed the cover from her body, revealing her naked skin. For the first time in forever, she felt proud

of her body. Proud to show it off and proud of the way the dryad males gazed at her.

Simian moved the cover from the foot of the bed and then motioned to the male dryads.

Zareena tried to count the dryads as they filled the room but lost count after forty. Instead, she watched them surround her, each holding a large ball of dew. They were as excited as she.

“May we?” Simian inquired.

Zareena nodded. “Yes, you may.”

Simian was the first of the male dryads to glide onto Zareena, landing gently onto her stomach. He moved his hand to his mouth and blew the crystal-clear ball of dew onto her skin.

Zareena’s eyes widened. The exact spot where the dew landed sent an orgasmic pulse through her body, almost raising her from the bed. “My goodness,” she whispered and clenched her fists. She squeezed her eyes closed. The pulse weakened and then evaporated. She opened her eyes and stared at the hoard of dryads waiting to follow Simian’s lead. “I’m not sure I can do this.”

Helena entered the room, and Simian moved away. “I will stay with you,” Helena said. “They will not harm you.” She moved to Zareena’s shoulder and whispered, “We are temples to the male dryads. They will wash away all your worries.”

Zareena nodded and turned to Helena. She used her hand to block her mouth, so the male dryads could not hear. “They all have an erection,” she said to Helena. “It’s like a forest of hard woods.”

The two giggled, and Zareena knew everything would be okay. “Please proceed, Simian,” Helena instructed.

Simian returned to his place on Zareena’s lower stomach. He flapped his wings and the other dryads swarmed Zareena’s body. The air around Zareena swirled and cooled her skin.

The sensation was electric, creating wave after wave of intense pulses that were quickly followed by intense orgasmic vibrations. Zareena opened her eyes to find her body covered in dew drops and dryads. She stared intently into Simian’s eyes as he fluttered backward, stopping atop her pubic bone, his feet kneading into the dark patch of hair.

Zareena gasped for air, refusing to take her eyes off the dryad. She nodded and licked at her dry lips. “Please,” she said, urging him to continue. Her mind soared into the clouds, and she felt light, as if all gravity had left her.

“You should grasp the bed,” Helena whispered. “It will help with what is about to come.”

Zareena did as Helena suggested, briefly sharing eye contact with the woman.

A dozen dryads surrounded each of Zareena’s nipples and covered them in dew. Zareena squeezed the bed sides as the dryads massaged the crystal liquid into her skin. Her nipples widened beneath the touch of the small creatures. But Zareena wanted more. She needed more. She bucked her hips and looked down at Simian, encouraging him to drop between her legs. She tried to bring her mind back to reality and tried to convince herself none of this was real. But it was real.

“I want you inside me,” Zareena pleaded and, using her hand, pushed the dryad between her legs.

The other male dryads flapped into the air and hovered over Zareena, watching Simian and starting into song.

Using her fingers, Zareena opened herself, pushing aside her silky folds. She watched Simian as Helena sang softly in her ear. She laid her head back and closed her eyes and relaxed.

“You are in control,” Helena said. “And only you. They are here for you. Cleansing. Washing away the old.”

Zareena moved her hand from between her legs and felt Simian’s wings flutter and push her lips apart. All she could do is feel. Feel Simian’s mouth lapping at her wet labia. Feel the pressure of his lips tugging at her trembling bud, the two tips of his tongue like vibrating toys. Something small entered her, and she pressed her ass against the bed before driving her hips into Simian’s growing erection. Yes, she had all the control in the world.

“He is not so small,” Helena whispered. “You will see, and you will enjoy.”

Zareena stopped moving, a growing sensation inside her. It was Simian. Still inside her, yet not so small anymore. She felt her opening expanding, accepting Simian’s attempts at driving into her. He was indeed growing inside her. His thing pulsed, pressing against the underside of her pubic bone, rubbing the wet, fleshy skin that would send her body spiraling.

“Be ready,” Helena whispered. “Feel the raging warmth. Let it inside you. Your body is accepting. He is ready, Zareena. I can see him. He is breathing harder. The others are singing, Zareena. Here he comes, Zareena. Here he comes.”

Zareena opened herself to the warm rush. The fullness. The wideness of Simian as he began pulling out. And then there was the relaxation of her lips. Them coming together, locking in what Simian had left behind.

“It’s not over,” Helena whispered quietly.

Zareena’s eyes opened and grew wide. She looked down in time to see Simian being shot backward toward the end of the bed, her juices leaving her so quickly, so thickly, that the small creature had no time to react. Her heart raced and thudded against her chest, her stomach bobbed as her body shook uncontrollably. She turned toward Helena. “How?”

Of course, she would ask such a question. But the answer was obvious. She’d opened herself to possibilities. The dew had truly washed away all inhibitions. For the first time in her life she was neither scared of or hesitant about her desires. And whatever Simian had released in her seemed to be spreading throughout her body. She glanced at her hands—silky-smooth. Not one wrinkle or blemish of any sort. She studied her breasts and nipples, the left always a bit larger than the right. But no more. They were now equals. Her body lay in perfect harmony with all around her, the awakening fast and all-consuming.

The chorus of dryads hovered above the bed. Simian, the bull of the dryads, watched. His body had already returned to its original size.

“Goodbye, Zareena,” Simian said, and led the other Dryads to the outside.

As Zareena sat up, Helena moved from her shoulder and hovered in the air.

“That was like last night,” Zareena said. “It was all around me.”

“We enjoy what we do,” Helena said. “We do not have the same inhibitions that your race has. We do not use our sexual prowess as a tool for revenge or use it against our partners. We do not withhold. We enjoy. We take ourselves beyond anything your race could possibly understand. We are not timid. We are not embarrassed. It’s a gift of enjoyment, and we partake each and every evening.”

“Again tonight?” Zareena asked.

“Yes, and for every night the past several thousand years. Your race still has a lot to learn.” Helena maneuvered toward the doorway. “We have a lot to discuss, Zareena. A lot I must explain and tell you. Your journey has just begun.” She kissed Zareena on the forehead and zipped away.

When Helena disappeared, Zareena moved to her feet and walked to the window which provided a grand view of the rising sun. Birds flew and hopped between trees, filling the morning with chirrups as splendid as the songs the dryads sang last night. Squirrels bounded from tree to tree, chasing after each other in a game of tag. Several dryads, male and female, danced in the air. They dipped and dived. Did somersaults and other tricks in the air. The world had taken on an unmatched perfection, home a distant memory.

Zareena walked away from the window and the eyes watching her from the woods and ran her hands over the lavender plants. The smell perked her senses. In fact, everything about the dryad village perked her senses. She thought of Simian and what he had done to her body. His presence and offering had awakened something in her that had laid dormant for too many years, her emerging sexual prowess becoming dark and needy.

Outside the small building, the dryads were hard at work, ensuring their village both safe and clean. Zareena watched the male dryads bringing in nuts and fruits from the forest. Several of the males stopped in mid-flight and marveled at her. She waved, and they flew off in excitement. Could she really handle being the center of anyone’s attention? Of course she could.

Simian was the first dryad to greet her. “I take you are feeling well?” he asked.

Zareena giggled a school girl’s laugh. “You take correctly,” she replied. She glanced between his legs. His erection remained. “Are you always like that? Is it a medical condition?” She giggled again and crossed her arms, her breasts resting upon them.

Simian looked down and grabbed his erection. “This thing?” he chuckled. “It is always this way. It will always be so in your presence.”

Zareena’s eyes lit up. “Your offering was too large for such a small body.”

“Many dryads have the ability to shapeshift. Not their entire body, but some of the more important parts. Our existence is determined by our offering.” Simian released his erection, and it bounced around like a pogo stick. He smiled and then zipped away.

Zareena noticed a group of female dryads watching her. Naked, she joined them.

“You like our men?” a young female asked. “My name is Hannah. Just like the Hannah’s from your land.” She introduced the other two dryads and then stole a glance toward a group of male dryads.

Zareena followed her gaze. “Are they all like Simian?”

The female dryads turned red, their bodies glowing as if blushing. “Luckily not,” Hannah said. “Simian cannot always control his erection.”

“He never loses it?” Zareena asked. “Never?”

Hannah shook her head. “Never.” She nudged one of the other female dryads. “And Helena is the only one who will now take his offering.”

Zareena looked around the small village, searching for Simian, hoping he might visit her once again, alone, his erection intact.

“He is gone,” Hannah said. “Every day he disappears and does not return until the evening.”

“I enjoyed his offering. Why only Helena?” Zareena asked.

The female dryads looked at each other. Then Hannah said, “In past times, his offerings caused the deaths of two females.” She fluttered closer to Zareena. “When he exploded inside, they exploded outside.”

“What stories are they telling you?” Helena asked, and hovered around the young females. They quickly flitted away.

“This is a beautiful place,” Zareena said. “I should stay longer.” She blew away a stray hair.

Helena shook her head. “Your journey must continue to the purple castle. Our king awaits your arrival.” She motioned toward the north along the path disappearing into the forest. “In the morning, your journey continues. Until then, we need to talk more about what you will find along your way.

Zareena followed Helena to the edge of the forest, where the path moved northward. On the ground lay a map. Zareena

recognized the starting point on the map as her house, the end point the purple castle and the king.

Helena moved to the ground. "I mentioned the dangers along the way. The dryads have never ventured out of the woods. The rumors of what lies beyond come to us by way of strangers who have passed through our land. We are told that you will find Narus at the Unicorn Waterfall. Every unicorn in the land is a direct decedent of Narus."

Zareena scrunched her eyebrows. "Meaning?"

"Meaning he is the only male stud in the herd," Helena replied. "The other unicorns will not cross him. Those that do or even try ... die."

"Why are you telling me this, Helena? I will pass through. I will say my hellos and then say my goodbyes," Zareena replied. "I do not intend in delaying my presence to the king you speak of."

Helena stared into Zareena's eyes. "The path is long, and the land of the unicorns is vast. You will have to stay at least one night. Narus will expend all his energy trying to make you his. He has magical ways, ways that will alter your way of thinking. Do not hold eye contact with him or any other male unicorns." Helena placed her tiny hand on Zareena's arm. "And never touch the horn of a unicorn, especially that of Narus. No one has ever lived to tell what it feels like holding such an object."

Helena pointed at the next area on the map, but Zareena stopped her before she could continue. "Tell me no more," Zareena said. "I will be cautious of the unicorns, satyrs, and elves and whatever else I may find on my journey. There's no need for you to worry. I cannot spend the rest of my life relying on others."

Helena's face grew dark and worrisome. "There is need for worry," she said sternly. She turned toward the forest. "Something watches us from afar. Lurking. Waiting for what, we do not know." She turned back to Zareena. "What lies at the end of the path will make all your dreams come true. But what lies between here and there will enter your nightmares. Now come, we must help the others prepare for the evening."

They joined the other female dryads, but Zareena's mind was elsewhere. She scanned the small village, looking for Simian. He had really disappeared. She hoped he would return this evening. She hoped he would return to her in the cottage. This time alone. What she did not think about was her past. It had been shuffled to the far reaches of her mind. She looked toward the castle and thought of the mysterious king.

"You are going to meet the king," Hannah whispered as she joined Zareena.

"I am. In the morning I will begin my journey."

Hannah moved closer. "You will see Narus on your way. We are told he is a magnificent creature." Two other female dryads joined them. "We also hear he is better than Simian." The three laughed and flapped their wings excitedly. "We saw him once. At the edge of the forest, where the path leads to his land. He was with a female." The three giggled, their eyes sparkling.

"And?" Zareena asked.

Hannah smiled. "His offering was great."

The three dryads soared into the air and crossed the village, leaving Zareena alone again.

With the dryads busy at work, preparing for the night's festivities, Zareena ventured up the path, leading toward the castle and her destiny.

She never thought of herself walking around life naked. But here it seemed natural. The dryads were the same, their bodies for all to view. She giggled at the thought of the male dryads living their lives with permanent erections. It seemed as if they could never be satisfied by the females. Then she remembered Simian and the erection that was almost the full length of his body. How had it grown so wide, so deep while inside her? And where had he gone off to?

Zareena stopped and sniffed the air. She knew the scent very well. Apples. Luscious red apples. The path veered to the right and around a sharp bend. Zareena found a basket of red apples like the ones on the tree in her backyard—the backyard she no longer cared about.

She grabbed an apple and sat on a log just off the trail. "Mm," she moaned, as she bit into the juicy fruit. It was better than the apples back home. Sweeter. Tastier. She took another bite and stood, finishing it off before returning to the trail, where the basket had vanished.

Zareena started back toward the dryad village but stopped when another scent wafted her way. She turned and continue north on the trail, the smell of peaches stronger than the scent of apples. Again, she found a basket, this one full of peaches.

"Hello?" she said. "Is someone there?" Before she snatched a peach, she glanced up and down the trail. "I know someone is there." She didn't know for sure, but neither the apples nor the peaches had appeared from thin air. She took a bite of the peach and held it on her tongue. The taste was exquisite. She looked for a place to sit. Finding none, she left the basket behind and continued north.

"Zareena!"

Zareena turned to find Helena and a dozen male dryads rushing toward her.

"What are you doing?!" Helena said angrily. Her wings flapped wildly.

"I just wanted to take a walk and clear my mind." She looked toward the castle high in the mountains. "Daydreaming about what I might find there." Then it occurred to her. Why was Helena so worried? What difference did it make when she left

for her journey? “There are more dangers, aren’t there? What are you not telling me?”

Helena nodded toward the other dryads, and they darted back down the path toward the village. “Our moon cycles last three days, the third day being our full moon. You should only travel this road under a full moon. The path will be safe beneath the moon’s glow. The other nights, when the moon is no more or less than full, every form of danger lurks, watching your every move, waiting for you. I told you it is not safe alone. You are in great danger.”

“Tonight, there is no moon,” Zareena said, and Helena nodded. She looked around for the peach basket but found it was gone. She glanced down at the peach in her hand and yelped before tossing it into the woods, slinging the squirming maggots into the air. “Who left the fruit? The apples and the peaches?”

Helena scanned the woods. “Banshee Ursula. She escaped from an ancient Irish prison three hundred years ago. She found our land shortly after she escaped. As long as you do not hear her cry, then you are safe.”

Zareena shook her head. “You didn’t answer my question. Why did she leave me the fruit?”

Helena zipped through the air and studied the forest around them. “She is a great seducer. She will want you for her own and not allow you to finish your journey.” She fluttered back toward the village and then turned. “We should return now.”

Zareena still did not totally understand Helena’s concern. If she could make it to Unicorn Waterfall before nightfall, she was sure there would be no danger. But then the worried look on the dryad’s face said that Zareena should listen.

The two entered the dryad’s home just as dusk was nipping at the sky. Zareena looked around, searching for Simian as she strolled the clearing. None of the dryads had mentioned where Simian disappeared to during the day. She laughed to herself and figured him like any man, leave when there’s work to be done, come back when the time for work had ended and the time for pleasure had begun.

“You went off on your own,” Hannah said as she flitted toward Zareena. “You got the wrath of Helena?”

“Very much so. She said the path was dangerous at night. She talked about Ursula.”

“The banshee,” Hannah said. “None of us have ever actually seen her. Only heard her cries in the nights. Some of the dryads believe she is but a myth. That the cries are those of a man who has lost his lover.”

“And the fruit I found?”

“A gift from the gods, of course.”

“Do you know where Simian disappears to?” Zareena asked. “Helena claims she does not know.” For the first time it occurred to Zareena that, like Simian, she was also missing, missing from her old life. Also, for the first time, she thought about her father and the heartache he must be suffering. She was finally regretting what she had done. Her intentions had never been to hurt anyone, but that was exactly what she had done. But sometimes a person needed this. The ability to walk away from all that was harming them. Somehow, she needed to get word back to her father that she was okay. He didn’t deserve the suffering of not knowing.

Hannah floated forward. Zareena raised her hand, and Hannah rested in her palm. “You would do well forgetting Simian. He belongs to Helena and Helena alone.”

“That’s kind of difficult to do after last night.” Sex with the dryad had been more than just sex. It had been on an unconscious level, like they’d been floating in space, all time stopping for a single moment of ecstasy. She did, in fact, still feel his offering floating around inside her, the dryad juice both titillating and relaxing.

“Many have fallen in love with Simian, for obvious reasons. But only Helena has ever been close to him. We females know better than to even talk to him.” Hannah looked around, and Zareena thought the dryad to be nervous.

“You’re not supposed to be talking to me, are you?” Zareena asked. “Who told you these things?”

“I’m many times in trouble,” Hannah replied. “In your world I’m called a nonconformist.”

“A troublemaker,” Zareena said and smiled. “I won’t mention it to anyone. I promise.” She regretted never being a troublemaker, or at least someone who refused to conform. Her life had been one of conformity. Had she ever done anything of her own accord?

“I want to come with you when you leave the dryads,” Hannah said. “Please.”

“They’ll be watching when I leave. They will know you joined me.”

“They will not know if we leave tonight,” Hannah said. “Everyone will be sleeping after pleasures have been had. Then we can go. Please, Zareena. Please take me with you.”

“There were guards at the trail last night after pleasures,” Zareena said. “There is no way to the trail without being seen.”

Hannah smiled shyly. “I know another way. It will take us around the guards. We can join the path after we have passed.”

“Helena said there are dangers in the woods. She thinks the banshee is after me. She thinks the banshee desires me in carnal ways.”

Hannah fluttered closer. “I can help you remain safe on your travels. I will come to you this evening after pleasures are had. We will escape through the window in the cottage. We can enter the woods there. We will be safe. You can trust me with all that you are.”

“And the banshee?”

“No. banshee Ursula will not come close. I promise.” Hannah’s eyes pleaded.

“Helena will be angry. The dryads will think I made you go.” But Zareena knew that was probably not true. Hannah’s reputation would follow her to death. Maybe the story about the banshee had been a way to scare her into not leaving so soon. And this was her journey, not Helena’s. Could it be that Helena was the one who wanted to leave this place and go to the castle? Maybe it was she who wanted to be by the king’s side.

“Please,” Hannah said softly. The dryad’s face turned sour.

“Okay,” Zareena replied. “Tonight, after offerings are made and everyone is sleeping. We will go.” Zareena started to turn away but moved closer to Hannah. “I will take you with me on one condition.” Hannah nodded. “Have one of your friends contact my father to let him know I am okay. He lives along the woods as well.” Hannah nodded, and Zareena went about her way.

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Zareena gathered in the center of the village where the dryads were beginning to congregate. The small creatures were an excited bunch. Their lives consisted of maintaining the health of the woods and having pleasures and offerings every night. She could not argue with such a life as it seemed to keep them at peace. She saw Helena and Hannah but still no Simian. She chided herself for the feelings she had for the small creature. How ridiculous could her love be? First off, they were totally different creatures. Secondly, she had a journey to complete. She forced herself to focus on the task at hand. She pushed Simian from her thoughts.

But what she didn’t understand was why if she were meant solely for the king, why last night had happened. Would the king not be disappointed in the Dryad’s? She had gladly accepted the offering. She wanted the offering. Needed it. But did that not taint her? Surely the king would be disappointed.

She watched Hannah and two female dryads swarm three males. Hannah mounted one of the stout males and rode him to the ground, her hips bucking, her wings flapping, pressing him harder against the ground. The male dryad was at her beck and call. Hannah’s breasts grew. Zareena had noticed this in passing last night, but the males seemed to ignore the engorging breasts, their concentration squarely on their own phallus. Maybe the male dryads weren’t that much different than human males. She giggled and continued her voyeuristic behavior. She never enjoyed watching others having sex. She had been taught to subdue her sexuality, that only her husband’s needs should be met.

All around the small village copulations were being had, offerings were being made. Unlike last night, none of the dryads even noticed her presence, their sexual acts much darker in nature than they were previously. She glanced up at the evening sky and saw no moon.

Zareena sniffed the air, the smell reminding her of Simian’s offering to her. The male dryads grew darker in color, their small bodies pumping frantically into their female counterparts. The females darkened with every thrust, every penetration, and every intrusion.

She stepped toward a dryad couple copulating on a large limb, the male dryad scissoring the female, one hand holding her leg into the air as his other hand milked the essence from her left breast. Zareena leaned closer and realized the female essence was what drove the males crazy, drawing them in, creating a drunken sex toy whose only purpose was to please the female dryad.

A soft singing filled the small village, and as Zareena looked around she found the males beginning to swell, their stomachs warped and misshapen as they drank from their partners. The singing suddenly stopped, and silence filled the air. Every creature ceased moving. Every male clung to his female partner.

Zareena glanced to her right. Helena lay with two male dryads, each inside her, each clinging to a breast, her wings wrapped safely around them. Her eyes blinked open, and she released a searing wail across the village. The other female dryads joined Helena’s praise.

The male dryads pumped hard and then released their offerings into their females. The females gladly received, wrapping their wings tightly around the male dryads, squeezing out every last bit of juice, then dropping the male dryads to the ground, spent and unable to move.

The female dryads fluttered into the air, creamy white juices dripping from between their legs. Every female joined together in a nearby tree, rejoicing in the offering filling their bodies. For hours the females danced and sang in the tree, zipping from branch to branch, spinning and hugging and praising one another, the males still motionless on the ground, drunk on pleasures.

Zareena moved closer to the group of females and gazed at their glowing stomachs.

Hours after the males had gone to sleep, the female dryads parked themselves on leaves, branches, and rocks. All but one fell quickly asleep.

“Go into your sleeping place, and I will meet you at the window,” Hannah said and fluttered away.

Zareena did as she was told but glanced back one last time at the sleeping creatures that had helped her begin her

unexpected journey. She stared at Helena a moment longer than the others. She was breaking her promise to the dryad leader. Maybe she should stay. Maybe Hannah was leading her into a bad place.

But she thought about the fruit she'd found, about the scents along the path, and then she thought about the king awaiting her in the purple castle. Leaving one day early would not hurt. Besides, she felt as if she were a burden to Helena. The dryad's face had been full of concern since Zareena arrived in the village. She wanted to be a burden to no one, not even a wood nymph.

Zareena continued into the building and looked out the window, where Hannah sat on the ledge, waiting. "Are you sure we should be doing this?" Zareena asked. She glanced at the empty doorway.

"Come," Hannah said. "The light of the sun is peaking in the east. We must hurry and be in the land of the unicorns before everyone awakes."

As Zareena climbed through the window, Hannah's body glowed brightly, lighting the way once they started in the direction of no return. She was no longer a conformist. It felt good to do something naughty. It felt good not to be the Zareena of old.

"Can you ever go back?" Zareena asked. She offered Hannah a seat on her bare shoulder, still feeling no shame for walking naked in the woods. She had never been so proud of her body. Not perfect in any sense, but it was hers and hers alone.

"Never," Hannah said. "They will come looking as far as the border between the dryad land and the land of the unicorns. They will venture no further."

"Why are you doing this? If you can never go back, you will never be with the dryads again." Zareena raised her nose into the air but found none of the scents she had found the previous day. She glanced left and right. The darkness was somehow different, her ability to see into the forest gone. She shuddered and felt Hannah's calming hand on her neck.

"I want to see what else lies beyond the woods," Hannah replied.

"But the offerings? You will not have another." Zareena turned her head toward the small dryad. "It seems the female dryads take great pleasure from the male dryads. What you may find beyond the forest is great loneliness."

"Isn't it like that where you come from?" Hannah asked. "Taking great pleasures from your males?"

For the first time, Zareena really thought about home and the husband she had left. The husband who had surely torn up the house looking for her. "Not always," she said. "Maybe once upon a time." She felt tears growing at the corners of her eyes. Once upon a time was what she had imagined life would always be like. Once upon a time she would live like a princess. Once upon a time her husband had promised to be her prince. Now the man in the purple castle was wanting to be her king. Fairytales were just that in her estimation. And they didn't happen to people like her.

"You are worried," Hannah said. "Things will be okay once we get to the next land. You will see. And I will make sure you stay safe."

"Simian didn't appear last night," Zareena said. "Why did he not return?"

"There are times when he doesn't join us during offering times. But he is still respected as a leader. None of the dryads know where he goes off to or what he's doing there. He only tells us to trust him, so we do."

Zareena glanced at the castle in the distance. "Have you ever met the king?"

Hannah shook her head. "No. Nobody has. We just know he is there, and he keeps us safe in the woods. Because he keeps us safe in our woods, we never go to the other lands." Hannah lifted from Zareena's shoulder. "I will make sure the way is clear." Hannah flew ahead, leaving Zareena alone.

Zareena continued the path, keeping her eyes on the faint glow further ahead, where Hannah, she thought, was making sure they were safe.

The glow disappeared as the path bent to the left, and when Zareena rounded the bend, she stopped in her tracks.

CHAPTER TWO

Banshee Ursula

“Ursula,” Zareena said and tried to stand stoically, trying hard to show no fear.

Ursula, wearing a gray cloak with a hood covering her face, moved onto the path from the forest. Zareena looked around for Hannah but found nothing of the dryad. Ursula pushed back her hood, and Zareena gasped at the divine beauty before her.

“I’m not what you imagined?” Ursula said and placed her hands on her hips.

Zareena stood stone-stiff, her eyes wide and staring. “Your beauty,” she managed to say. The woman radiated a sinful and seductive aura that Zareena had never experienced. The magic in the enchanted land knew no limits. She felt herself oddly attracted to the woman.

Ursula moved to a knee and waved her hand across the path. A basket of peaches appeared, and the smell swiftly hit Zareena’s senses.

“Your journey brings you to me,” Ursula said. “I’m here to protect you. To help you on your journey.” She stood and handed Zareena a golden peach. The fruit had the same glowing aura as the woman.

Zareena bit into the peach, and her knees weakened, the taste like nothing she’d savored before. “May I have another?” she asked. She knew right away they were not ordinary peaches. Like Ursula, they emitted something decadent, something carnal.

“But of course,” Ursula said. “I have the most delightful fruit in all the land. Ripe and juicy to the palate. You will enjoy the taste of everything I have.” She bowed slightly but kept her eyes on Zareena. “Would you like to see what I have to offer?”

Zareena finished her second peach and wiped her moist lips, noticing for a moment Ursula staring at her naked body. She glanced down the path in the direction of the dryad village. It was too late to turn back. “There was a female dryad with me,” she said. “Did she pass you?”

Ursula shrugged. “I saw no dryads. But the creatures are small and stick to the woods.” She pointed toward the woods. “My home is through those trees. She will be able to find you when she wants. I’m sure she knows the way.”

Zareena took a deep breath and decided Ursula was not like she was told. She grabbed another peach from the basket and followed Ursula into the forest. Her bare feet tickled as she stepped on the fir tree droppings. Everything in this new world pleased her. The smell of pine and fruit blanketed the seldom used path they walked. The air was thin and cool. The trees seemed to cower from the path as they had when she first met the dryads.

“You are on your way to the purple castle?” Ursula asked as they walked. “To see our king?”

“So you know of him?” Zareena asked. She caught an abhorrent darkness in the woman’s eyes as they stared at one another. Zareena bit her bottom lip unsure why she did not fear the woman and the wickedness spoken about her. Truth be told, she felt a not-so-fleeting attraction to the woman. It neither scared her nor repulsed her.

“He is our king. We all know of him,” Ursula said. “He is beloved throughout our land.”

“You’ve met the king?” Zareena asked. She looked away from the woman’s eyes, trying to compose herself, trying to subdue a salaciousness growing inside.

Ursula kept walking but glanced at Zareena. “I’ve never met the king, but I plan to someday. I am sure the moment will be life-changing.”

“You know of Helena, the female dryad leader?” Zareena questioned. “She told me you would not be good for me. Said I should fear you. She said everyone in this land fears you.”

“Here we are,” Ursula said, and as they stepped through heavy underbrush her home came into view. She turned to address Zareena. “There’s no reason to fear me, dear one. The dryads are worrisome creatures that do not understand those outside the dryad lands. They keep to themselves when they should be celebrating all creatures.”

Zareena saw she had made a mistake. The dingy building was no more than the size of her garage back home. Everything was dark and dirty. The shutters hung limp and appeared to be ready to fall. The roof dipped in the middle, and the front door was almost off its hinges. There were no plants within twenty-feet of the place. **A small wooden structure sat off to the left, several stacks of firewood filling its space.** Ursula had claimed to have more delicious fruit. From where? It had been a bad decision to leave the dryads. A bad decision to join Ursula. When would she stop making bad decisions?

“The outside does not do the inside justice,” Ursula said. “You shall see. Come.”

But Zareena didn’t think so. “I should go back to the path. The dryads will come looking for me, and I wish them no troubles.” They would not come looking for her or Hannah. The two had exited the dryad land and were on their own. Besides, Zareena, at least for the moment, had no desire to be found. She wanted to experience the allure of the woman who had brought

her here. She needed to know if she had made a mistake.

“Very well,” Ursula said and left Zareena’s side. “Follow our footsteps, and you will return.” She entered the old house and closed the door. The door stayed intact.

Zareena looked back at the footprints in the dirt. She then looked at the house. Ursula had let her leave freely. Hannah was used to the woods. She would surely be safe. Helena was only doing what she thought right, but maybe what she thought right was only her being overly cautious. No, she would not turn back; she would continue forward. Her journey was just as much about defeating fear as it was to find happiness and joy. All the regrets of the past pushed her forward.

Zareena crossed the barren yard to Ursula’s front door. The porch squealed as if in pain. She scanned the area once more for Hannah. Maybe she had changed her mind and returned to the dryad land. Either way she was gone, and once again Zareena had to survive on her own. She wouldn’t have it any other way. No more relying on someone else to care for her. Yes, she still looked for her prince, or king, but she could take care of herself regardless of what land she traveled or what dangers she faced.

Her father had instilled in her a long time ago that one must find joy, and then everything else would follow. Joy meant loving and respecting yourself before trying to love and respect others. She missed her father and his guidance. She missed the times when she was a little girl and they would go to the greenhouse and buy flowers and then plant them around the house when they arrived home. She missed him pushing her on the swing in the back yard, the swing he’d hung from a large oak that shaded the entire yard. Most of all she missed the incredible hugs he gave her. His hugs were always filled with just the right amount of love, caring, and admiration for her. He enjoyed talking about her achievements. Everything she’d done from the time she was a toddler to getting a job as a trauma nurse. He bragged on her so much that she often turned red with embarrassment. But that was him. It was what made him special in her eyes.

Zareena wiped her eyes and cleared her throat. She knocked on the door and waited.

“Please come in, Zareena,” Ursula said. “My home is your home.” The voice was seductive and inviting. How could anyone reject the woman?

She opened the door, and for the second time in less than an hour she stopped in her tracks. Up until then everything that had been impossible had become possible. Things that were not supposed to exist existed. Why should this be any different? She stepped inside the house and closed the door that was splintered wood on the outside but gold on the inside. In fact, the entire room shined yellow from golden walls, golden lights, and golden furniture.

“Your people have a saying,” Ursula said. “Do not judge a book by its cover.”

The room stretched so far into the distance, Zareena was sure it would take days to cross.

“It’s really there,” Ursula said. “Everything you see is tangible and touchable. It is not a dream. See, you have nothing to fear of me or the life I live. You would be happy here.”

Zareena took a seat across from Ursula, sitting on a chair that hugged her naked body, literally. The fabric was soft and reminded her of animal fur. She ran her hand over the cushion and thought it felt like the back of a horse she once owned. The chair gently closed in on her, like a cat rubbing a human’s leg for affection. In turn, Zareena stroked the chair with her hand. The chair seemed to swoon and release a sigh of satisfaction as if it were a living, breathing creature.

“You live alone?” Zareena asked.

“I do. But not for long.” She stood and walked behind Zareena. “I think the right person for me is close.” She put her hands on Zareena’s shoulders. They were warm with sinful intentions. “So why are you going to see the king?”

Zareena thought for a moment and realized she did not know. In fact, before entering the dryad’s land, she had no thoughts of finding a king or anyone else. What she was running from was more obvious than what she was running to. The dryads had made the suggestion to find the king. They had declared her quest, her journey. She finally shrugged. “It’s what the dryads claimed was my destiny.”

“I see. Do *you* claim it as your destiny?” Ursula walked around the chair and returned to the couch that appeared to be made of the same material as the chair. She put her arm along the back of the couch and stretched out her legs across the cushions. She then naughtily pulled her cloak up her legs to her thighs, her fingers tracing back over her silky-skin.

Zareena watched with an interest she’d never had for another woman. Nobody could argue the appeal of the female figure. Even she admired a woman with perfect curves, perfect smile, and an imperfect personality. Often, women were pleasing to *all* the senses. Helena said Ursula would be a great seducer. She stared at Ursula’s perfect feet, the sleekness of her shins and calves. A series of small freckles looked like the Gemini constellation. Zareena moistened her lips as she fantasized about Ursula’s thighs. Her thighs were white and muscular. Deliciously so. Her mind forged images of the two women making love, their bodies locked together for an eternity. Her gaze blurred, and everything moved in odd ways, distorting the room and Ursula.

“You enjoyed my peaches?” Ursula asked. She stood and removed her cloak, exposing her perfectly shaped body.

Zareena steadied herself by grabbing the chair arms. “What have you done to me?” She stood and wobbled on her knees. Ursula quickly went to her aid, catching her as she fell.

The king stood atop the purple wall above the entry to the castle—two magnificent gates. He watched her with great interest, his hands on his hips, stoically locked in a gaze. She stopped at the gates and waited. He said nothing, only watched her. He appeared to be both king and knight in shining armor. Even from this distance she could see his splendid green eyes, his perfectly shaped face, a face clean-shaven, black hair pushed back into a ponytail, a body that included broad shoulders, muscular chest and stout legs. His red cloak flapped in the wind behind him.

She continued forward and placed her hands on the gates. The gates dissolved, removing her only obstacle to entering the castle. She entered the courtyard and looked up at the purple wall. The king was gone. In the courtyard, she could see the four spirals, each located at the four corners of the castle. Two horses stood inside a stable against the far-left wall, the gallant horses quietly eating hay. The horses glanced her way and then returned to their meal. A well for water sat in the middle of the courtyard, its walls as purple as the castle itself. Yet another piece of this land held perfection.

The main living area was located toward the back of the grounds, the large windows dark and uninviting. Though she felt as if a stadium of people was watching her through the blackness. She opened the front door and entered, where she found a creature sitting on a throne made of splintered wood. Neither the throne nor the man sitting on the throne was what she ever could have imagined. He was not a man at all, but some deformed creature arisen from the pits of Hell. She turned away and ran, ran through the open-door way, across the courtyard, and through the open castle gates. She didn't dare stop and turn. Instead, she ran back down the path, her heart thudding against her chest, her breathing deep and labored. If it were not for the wailing scream, she may have run all the way back home and to the man she'd left.

Zareena opened her eyes and tried to move. She tried again and grunted against the restraints holding down her hands and feet. "Ursula!"

She laid her head down and looked to the right at the closed door. The peaches. She had been foolish to trust the banshee Ursula. She had been warned by Helena, but she did not listen.

"Ursula!"

Another wail from outside the house stung her ears. She knew enough about Irish folklore to know what the screams meant. Someone had either died, or a death was imminent. Hannah was missing, lost in the woods. Ursula had tricked them both.

Zareena scanned the room the best she could and saw nothing to help her predicament. She jerked her head toward the door when it opened and in stepped an unclothed Ursula.

"You tricked me," Zareena said angrily. "I trusted you." How many times had she trusted someone only to get hurt by that very trust? It needed to end, now.

Ursula moved to the foot of the table Zareena lay on. "You came of your own free will. Just like you will stay of your own free will. Won't you?"

Zareena strained against the leather straps. "I'll scream if you don't let me go." No, she wouldn't.

Ursula climbed onto the table like a cheetah after its prey, her movements precarious yet lecherous.

"Let me go." She didn't really want to be let go.

"You don't really want to be released, do you?" Ursula crawled her way up the table, her hands on either side of Zareena's legs.

"Let me go," Zareena said, but this time her request was less demanding. She looked into the ravenous eyes approaching her. She sniffed the air, the essence of the banshee unbridled.

"You don't really mean it, do you?" Ursula said greedily. She stopped when her body was over Zareena's. "You want me as much as I want you." Her thighs brushed against Zareena's, and Zareena writhed from need.

"I don't," Zareena whimpered. But she did. She wanted every part of the woman who had restrained her. She raised her head and looked down the body hovering above hers. The beauty was magical. "Kiss me," she said, craving her captor.

Zareena closed her eyes when Ursula's succulent lips pressed against hers. She then opened her mouth, allowing Ursula's delicious tongue to wander inside, their tongues swishing back and forth, tiny taste buds meeting, warmth passing from one woman to the other. Zareena hungrily lifted her head, opening her mouth wider, engorging herself on the warm breaths rapidly being breathed into her body.

She tugged at the restraints again and found them gone. She recalled female dryads wrapping their wings around their male partners, hugging them close as offerings were made. Zareena wrapped her arms and legs around Ursula, the banshee suddenly struggling to breath, trapped in another's desire.

Ursula tore her mouth away from Zareena and gasped for air. "What..."

"I want you," Zareena said and turned the banshee over, moving atop her. Zareena stared into the banshee's eyes, grinding against her, the banshee's patch of black hair between her legs growing warm and moist. The smooth, mouth-watering swatch of glistening hair fueled Zareena's hunger for whatever lewd act awakened between the two.

Zareena moved Ursula's head to the right and kissed her milky-white neck, her tongue lingering against the smooth skin. Zareena shuddered when her nipples rubbed against Ursula's, the banshee's body electric and sensual to the touch. She kissed the banshee hard, harder than she'd ever kissed anyone. She remembered the male dryads rubbing against her body and how good it felt, how it sent her body and mind reeling. She did the same to the banshee who had tried to seduce her. Who had tried to restrain her. But Zareena was no longer that woman, the woman of old who was never in control. She was no longer the woman who let things happen to her. She was now the aggressor. She was the woman who went after things, no longer stuck in neutral.

She reached between the banshee's legs and rubbed gently, playfully dipping her fingers into the woman's slit. The banshee's reaction—her hips thrusting against the hand—encouraged Zareena to rub harder. Zareena's finger entered the banshee, and the banshee screamed, wailing frightfully. She found the banshee's reaction beautifully bestial.

Zareena removed her wet hand and tasted the banshee's essence, the bitterness an aphrodisiac that flamed Zareena's yearning. She moved down the banshee's body, totally in control, her mouth finding the breasts that were rocking against rapid breathing. She wrapped her lips around one of the nipples and sucked, sucking so hard that the banshee wailed again. When she released the nipple, Zareena squeezed the engorged bud between her fingers, her mouth finding the other nipple as the banshee struggled against the onslaught of the woman she'd captured.

Zareena sucked. Opened her mouth and then sucked more, the banshee squirming uncontrollably beneath her. She lowered her hand between the banshee's legs again, this time driving two fingers into the wet, pulsing hole. The banshee writhed as her juices enveloped Zareena's prodding fingers.

Ursula wailed again but instead of fighting against Zareena, she gave herself over, relenting to the woman she thought weak.

Zareena's mind freed years of frustration and fear. A depraved sexual power had been released, never to be subdued. She slipped another finger into the banshee and then quickly pressed her mouth over the banshee's as it wailed.

The sound reverberated through Zareena's body, pushing her over an edge she'd never come close to. Her mind's eye stared over the edge. She saw the dark, the wicked, the perverted. She saw herself reborn into a carnal creature with an insatiable ardor.

The banshee's hand slipped between Zareena's legs, and Zareena opened herself to the invasion. When the banshee slid in a second finger, Zareena raised her head and wailed. When she stopped, she glanced down at Ursula, not fully sure who was in control.

Ursula's eyes were glazed, but her mind was fully aware. "You still belong to me," she said, and slid a third finger into Zareena.

Zareena let a small smirk devour the corner of her mouth. "I think not, banshee." She drove her hips against the fingers inside her, positioning her body so that her own fingers played piano inside the banshee's hole.

Together the two women wailed in a tantalizing frenzy, bodies wet, legs shaking, nipples large and protruding, mouths coming together to capture the screams of ecstasy. Entwined, the two fell to the floor, writhing and gasping for air.

Ursula was the first to fall limp, her fingers slipping from Zareena.

Zareena kissed the banshee who had led her from the path. Who had seduced her yet had become unable to control her. Zareena was keeping a promise to herself. She would not let another control her. Man or woman. Banshee or dryad. Unicorn or whatever else was waiting on her during this journey.

Seeing the banshee relent, Zareena stared into the woman's eyes and placed her hand against the woman's face. "I want the power that you have. The magical power."

Ursula placed her hands on Zareena's knees, the knees that were straddling her. "You have all of me you wish." She raised her hips, pressing the small patch of black hair against Zareena's. "We are forever lovers, Zareena. Forever. You will always be mine. Remember that. No matter where you go or what you do, we will be connected eternally."

"I have a quest," Zareena said and crawled from the table. "An epic journey to see a king. We cannot be lovers." Zareena left the room and when she did, she smelled the sweet scent of peaches. Had it been the peaches that made her weak and fall into Ursula's arms? She followed the scent of peaches through the house and exited through the back door, where a field of peach trees glowed into the night sky. Every tree held an abundance of the fuzzy, sweet fruit.

Zareena stopped at the first tree and plucked a peach from one of the thin branches. The fruit had turned her into a ravenous animal unlike her previous self. She bit into the sweet fruit and moaned with pleasure. "You seduced me with your fuzzy fruit," she said, hearing Ursula exiting the small house. "How did you know I was staying with the dryads?"

Ursula stepped next to Zareena and plucked her own peach from the tree. She bit into the golden fruit and closed her eyes. "Rumors have spread throughout the land that a woman entered from the edge of the forest between our land and the forbidden land. The secret of your coming is no more."

"Forbidden land?"

Ursula slipped her hand into Zareena's, and the two naked women walked between trees. "Corruption and hate fill the people in your land. We hear of all the treacheries. We hear of your wars and murderers. We see how you treat the land." She

turned to Zareena, a familiar glint in her eyes. “You are the first woman to crossover.” They continued walking albeit gingerly.

“Have any of you entered the forbidden land?” Zareena asked and let go of Ursula’s hand.

Ursula pulled another peach from a nearby limb and then leaned against the tree. The limb shook and then stilled. Another peach grew from where she had plucked the one in her hand. “None have crossed back over,” she said.

Zareena sat at the base of the tree across from Ursula. The ground felt as if made of animal fur. “Crossed back over? Meaning that is where some of you came from?”

“Before humanity was created there was us. Slowly, over time with the spreading of the current human race, we were squeezed out of our land. Of course, there have been sightings of us made by your people. Then you make movies or create mythical legends about us that claim we are not real. Just a figment of someone’s imagination. If your race can’t see it plainly, they don’t believe it. We really do exist. And at some point in the future, we will return to our rightful place. Your world belongs to us. It always has.”

“But why allow me to intrude on your land?” Zareena asked. She gazed at Ursula’s body, how perfect she was. Her nipples had gone soft, and the swatch of hair between her legs had gone dry. Despite the banshee’s deception, Zareena felt as if she were falling in love with the woman. A craving that tormented her soul. But she had also fallen in love with Simian. The strange land was doing odd things to her mind and body.

“The king saw fit to allow you to travel into our land,” Ursula said.

Zareena looked up at the castle in the distance, where her final destiny lay in wait.

“Do you think you could love me for a lifetime?” Ursula asked. “Me and only me?” She finished the peach and tossed the core away. “I would treat you like a queen. It would be like that forever. I give you my word.”

Zareena motioned toward the castle. “I have a king for that, Ursula.” She glanced away from the woman but then looked up shyly. “Though I do believe I could love you. Love you as much as anyone.” But that was not necessarily true. She had fallen in love with Simian. And, to be honest, she missed him very much. But the dryad had left without saying goodbye. It saddened her that the love had only gone one way. She stood and gazed at the banshee that had tricked her. Love makes people do desperate things. She had released her while they were on the table and had given her the opportunity to leave. But she had remained. Why?

“Do you love me, banshee?” Zareena did not want to use the woman’s name. It would have been too intimate, making it harder to continue her journey to the castle.

Ursula grabbed another peach from the tree and then approached Zareena. “More than anything in this land.” Using her free hand, she tilted Zareena’s head skyward. With her other hand, Ursula raised the peach above Zareena’s mouth and squeezed.

The peach collapsed, sending juices down Zareena’s mouth and chin. A thick glistening stream traveled between her breasts, down her stomach, and between her legs. The ground beneath them shrugged and shuttered.

Zareena stared at the starry sky as Ursula’s mouth nibbled at her chin, the woman’s lengthy tongue stretching down her neck where peach juices were thick and sweet. She lowered to her knees and closed her eyes, the hand at the small of her back suggesting she lay on the ground. She followed the guidance of the banshee’s hand—still wondering if she could love such a woman. Still wondering if she should continue her trip to the castle.

On her back, eyes still closed, Zareena opened her mouth and reached for the legs on either side of her face. She breathed in deeply, the banshee’s fleshy folds coming close, closer, until they were against her tongue. Zareena had never been with another woman before this, never having the slightest desire to do so. But the banshee’s body, her sexual prowess, everything she represented, pulled her in like a bug to a light. She squeezed the legs around her, the satin-grass beneath her like a bed prepared for the greatest of lovers. She parted the legs, lowering the banshee against her mouth, allowing her tongue to enter the woman.

The banshee wailed at the intrusion, the scream raising Zareena’s hips skyward. The banshee’s mouth and tongue found their way between Zareena’s legs, the two women locked together by tongue and want. Each woman licked hard and long, meeting the labors of the other.

The banshee grabbed a peach from a limp branch and squeezed the small fruit, sending fuzz and juices splattering across Zareena’s open lips and exposed opening. The banshee devoured the juices, Zareena shaking uncontrollably, inciting her fervor for the woman.

Zareena came quickly, her mouth lapping between the banshee’s legs, her thirst for the woman long from being quenched.

Ursula rocked on Zareena’s face, the banshee’s large clit rubbing salaciously against Zareena’s chin. Zareena opened her mouth wide and drank in the banshee’s streaming offering. The banshee collapsed atop Zareena, the two women moaning, faces buried between legs, appetites satisfied albeit temporarily.

Zareena opened her eyes and kissed the banshee’s legs, the touch satisfying and soul relaxing.

The ground beneath Zareena softened, and her mind relaxed.

“Zareena! Zareena, wake up!”

Zareena opened her eyes and saw Hannah’s silhouette thick against the silvery, voyeuristic moon behind her.

“Why did you stray from the path?!” Hannah asked. “I’ve been looking for you for days!”

Zareena sat up and leaned against the rotted tree next to her. She glimpsed the trees around her. All dark and ominous, their branches like animal claws, not a peach in sight. She hurried to her feet and stepped away from Hannah. “Ursula? Where is she?”

“Who? The banshee?” Hannah fluttered in front of Zareena. “You saw her?”

Zareena nodded and licked her lips, the savory taste of the banshee still strong. She’d not been dreaming. Her fervor for Ursula still euphoric. “She was here. With me.” She searched her lips again for the creamy taste of the woman who had disappeared. “She’s gone?”

“She was never here,” Hannah said. “I found you sleeping alone.”

Zareena ignored Hannah and turned up the path. Maybe Ursula had returned home and was waiting for her.

She followed the path with Hannah flittering behind her, calling her name. When she came to the clearing where there should have been a small rickety house, Zareena’s heart sank. Like Simian, Ursula had abandoned her. She swiveled on her heels and looked toward the purple castle.

“We should go to the path,” Zareena said. “Now.”

CHAPTER THREE

Unicorn Falls

Zareena stood at the edge of the path where the woods met the valley of the unicorns. The disappointment of losing Ursula weighed heavily on her mind. She wished the woman could have accompanied them on the journey. She wished Simian could have joined as well.

Hannah sat on her shoulder, humming a dryad song she'd started a few minutes earlier. The castle was still visible in the distance, though, a bit closer than the first time she saw it. Flags waved atop the spires, though, she couldn't see the image on the flags. She imagined a coat of arms or a lion or something else signifying the king's power. The king in her dreams had been a magnificent man. Big and strong and handsome.

On either side of the path leading into the valley, thousands of flowers wafted in the wind. The flowers were of such variety that every color beneath the rainbow was represented. Her grandmother had loved daisies, and there was no shortage of daisies in the valley. She would have adored this place. Large, skyscraper-like trees sporadically peppered the valley, their branches as wide as a car, leaves the size of elephant ears. The leaves, like the flowers surrounding the path, appeared in dozens and dozens of colors, everything from green to neon-yellow. They were nothing like the trees back home or like the trees in the dryads' forest. Everything in front of her held a hidden magic to the eye.

Hannah changed her tune, the song heavenly to Zareena's ears. She regretted allowing the dryad to accompany her. She knew what it was like to leave people behind, to be the lone soul. Hannah, Zareena thought, would soon become homesick and want to return. She considered offering Hannah another opportunity to change her mind but decided against the idea. The dryad was willing to accept the consequences of leaving her people behind. Who was Zareena to dash another's dreams?

Several hundred yards away, where the path appeared to dip, an enormous waterfall appeared to drop straight from the sky. Though Zareena guessed the thick clouds—the only clouds in the sky—over the waterfall only made it appear that way. A mist rose from the base of the waterfall, creating an enormous rainbow of which she could only see the arc. Since it was a magical land, she wondered if at the end of the rainbow sat a pot of gold. The idea made her smile and briefly forget about the banshee and Simian.

There was a scent of flowers, but also the scent of horses on the warm breeze working across the valley. The smell reminded Zareena of her grandfather's farm. When she visited on the weekends, she woke early and spent all morning in the stables bathing, brushing, and walking horses. Her favorite had been a mare name Mindy. After a good grooming, she rode Mindy around the farm, stroking the horse's mane and patting the horse on the neck as if they'd been friends for birth. Years later she had been there when they had to put Mindy down. Shortly after that, her grandfather passed away. No way to be sure but she thought the two deaths had somehow been connected as her grandfather's sadness over the horse's death became very apparent.

"The path isn't going to move for us," Hannah said.

Zareena turned her head and smiled at the dryad. She found it odd that Hannah didn't leap from her shoulder and fly off into the valley even if it only for a few yards. "It's a beautiful place, isn't it?"

Hannah nodded. "The unicorns are just as beautiful. And remember what I said, just be careful with Narus. He can be deceiving at times. And once he sees you, he'll want nothing more than to be *with* you." Hannah's left eyebrow raised as if to say trouble would be had if Zareena did not listen.

"Be with me?"

"Yes," Hannah said. "He will want to give you his offering."

Zareena frowned. "You can't be serious. I want nothing to do with an offering from a horse. Trust me, I'm not into that kind of thing."

Hannah giggled. "You have a lot to learn about our home. He would not be making his offering to you as a unicorn. And do not call him a horse. He will get very upset. It is like calling the king a prince instead."

Zareena started to step forward but stopped and placed her hands on her hips. She gave the dryad a scornful look for playing mind games. "Are you going to explain what that means?"

"When the time comes," Hannah said. "And the time will come," she added and giggled.

Zareena sighed. "Okay, have it your way. But there's no way in hell—or in the land of unicorns—that I'm doing a horse. It's not happening."

Hannah nodded. "A unicorn."

"Whatever!" Zareena turned away from the dryad and began her journey along the path.

As they walked, Hannah sang another dryad song, albeit soft and nearly a whisper. Zareena's mind returned to Ursula, and she wondered whatever became of the woman. The banshee had disappeared along with the house and the field of peaches.

She had not imagined it all as Hannah suggested. Everything had been real, including her love for the woman. But had it been love or a waning fascination with something she'd never experienced before? The banshee had seduced her initially, but then Zareena had turned the tables on the woman, seducing her back. Controlling her. Even now she felt as though she had consumed some of the banshee's magical powers.

But, of course, if she were going to think about Ursula she also had to think of Simian, the one she truly loved. True love? No, impossible. Simian lived in the woods and was barely a foot tall. Her love was really for the land, not the creatures that called it home. The land called after her like a mother calling for a child. At times she thought she heard her name being whispered on the gentle wisps of wind. And at times she felt as if she had been in the strange land all her life. She was prepared to call the place her home.

"What are you thinking about, Zareena? You seem to be lost in your own mind." Hannah eyed her suspiciously. "Surely you are not still thinking about Simian."

"Everything that has happened since I left home. About Simian, Helena, you and the banshee. In a way, I feel like this was my home all along. As if I belong here and nowhere else. I'm not sure why I was with that man. I'm not sure why I lived in the place I did. Now that I've been here, my past seems so foreign to me. Like it never should have happened. Like it belongs to a different person now."

"You like it here?" Hannah asked.

"How could I not? It's a magnificent place. I never want to leave." Zareena stopped. "She looked at the dryad forest that seemed so far away now. "You should not have left your home or your people. I am afraid you may regret your decision."

Hannah giggled. "We are not people."

Exacerbated, Zareena sighed loudly. "You know what I mean. They were your family, your kind. There are none past those woods."

"I want to be part of greatness," Hannah said. "There is a love story being written in the history of our land, and all I want is to witness the happily ever after. I want to see you and our king become one. I could not do that from the forest."

"You believe the king and I is this love story you speak of? You believe us to be a fairy tale in a fairy tale land." Zareena continued the path, her mind working through all that had happened to her. "There is no certainty your king will even find me worthy of his castle, or his land. He may send me back home, back to my people."

"The burden is not on the king," Hannah replied. "The burden will be on you."

Zareena stopped again. "Me?"

Hannah nodded matter-of-factly.

"There's more to this journey than you or the other dryads have told me. I'm not continuing another step until you spill the beans," Zareena said. Hannah's face turned confused. "Spill the beans." She shook her head and threw up her arms. "Tell me what you're hiding."

Hannah opened her mouth to speak but quickly clamped her jaws shut when a strange snorting sound drew their attention from the northwest. "It's the unicorns! They're at the waterfall. They'll be there for their mid-day thirst! Hurry!"

"No, not yet. I want to see them before they see us." Zareena moved to her knees. Hannah stayed on her shoulder.

"What are you doing?" Hannah asked. She put her hands on her small hips.

Zareena motioned in the direction of the noise. "I'm going to sneak up on them and see what they're doing. What if he is making an offering? I do not wish to disturb such a thing."

"I wouldn't do..." Hannah began but stopped when Zareena started through the field of flowers on her hands and knees. She quickly took a seat atop Zareena's head, so the flowers and stems would not slash across her body. "This is a very bad idea," Hannah said. "Remember, I have warned you of this behavior."

"Shush, I know what I'm doing." Zareena moved like an animal lost on a prairie.

"No, you do not. And to be honest, I think you're going to regret this. But, of course, you know more than I." Hannah crossed her legs and studied her fingernails. "I won't be responsible for what happens."

Zareena continued her crawl, wiping her eyes along the way. She'd had allergies back home, and here seemed to be no different. In fact, her eyes burned more. She finally stopped at the line between the field of flowers and the clearing where the waterfall pooled.

It took several seconds before her vision cleared. But when it did, Zareena stared in awe. The sight was majestic and reminded her of pictures she had seen of Hawaii.

In front of her, massive and colorful, was the tallest waterfall she'd ever seen. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet fell to a small pool at the bottom. And at the top of the waterfall stood another brilliant rainbow, the clouds no longer visible. She thought the land of unicorns to be much more beautiful than the land of the dryads.

The grass beneath her body felt like satin, tickling between her toes. Flowers bloomed colors so sharp, so precise that they appeared in 3D. She could almost taste the colorful plants.

She looked up at the blue sky, the sun hanging lazily to the west. Everything was glorious and soothed her worry. She stood and started toward the pool of water but stopped when something rustled in the nearby tall brush.

“What the hell?” she gasped.

A herd of white unicorns appeared from nowhere and panned out across the small clearing. It was as if they’d been cloned from the exact DNA. But as she stared harder, she noticed that each unicorn’s horn varied in size, though all the unicorns, save for one, stood at the same height.

“They are beautiful creatures,” Zareena said and glanced at Hannah, who was giggling beneath the small hand covering her mouth. Zareena blinked several times, her eyes still stinging though not as bad as they had while she crawled through the flowers. “Why are you laughing?”

Hannah pointed toward the calm pool at the base of the waterfall. “See for yourself. You will not believe me.”

Zareena took a deep breath and stood, drawing the gaze of the herd, including the most majestic of the lot. Side-stepping, she made her way toward the water under watchful eyes. As she got closer to the water she stopped, placed her hands on her hips, and frowned at the smiling unicorns.

“What’s so funny?” Zareena asked Hannah. She turned her head, and the dryad was still laughing beneath her hand. “They’ve never seen a naked woman?”

“I don’t believe they have, but I am certain that is not what they find humorous.” Hannah leapt from Zareena’s shoulder and hovered over the pool of water several feet away. “Take a look into the water.”

Zareena, a little put-off at being laughed at, approached the shimmering water. The lead unicorn whinnied, drawing her attention again. “I don’t think I like you,” she said to the approaching unicorn. As beautiful as the creature was, she found nothing about the situation funny.

The unicorn whinnied again and shook its head. The animal approached, sending Zareena shuffling backward toward the pool of water until she finally ran out of room.

“He’s scaring me,” Zareena said. “Look at the way he’s watching me. You are not a very nice horse!”

“Unicorn,” Hannah whispered. “And he is trying to figure you out. Narus is like that. A very curious creature when another strange creature enters his land.”

“Narus? The leader?”

Hannah nodded. “Because he has the biggest horn.” She giggled, and this time it came out much like one of her songs, pleasing to the ears. “I think he wishes for you to gaze into the water. As we all wish.”

Zareena stepped to the water’s edge and waited for the ripples to calm. When the water calmed it was like staring into a mirror. “Oh ... my ... gawd!” She looked up at Hannah. “What happened?!”

“The flowers,” Hannah said. “I told you it was a bad idea. I told you, you would regret not listening to me.”

Zareena stared into the water again. Her face was covered in spots of red, orange, green and yellow. Her breasts had streaks of red, black, purple and blue. Her stomach was a checkerboard of at least a dozen colors. The swatch between her legs had been changed to deep, shiny purple. Her legs, from the knees down, were green and speckled brown. Her upper legs had more colors than the rainbow above the waterfall.

Zareena turned to the unicorn. “He can see the colors. Is that what you are laughing at?” She scowled at Narus.

Hannah fluttered to Zareena’s shoulder. “Yes. The land of the unicorns is like an artist’s palette, still wet with color. Everything you touch becomes a part of you, except for the path that leads from one land to the next. You become what you touch.”

“How can he see the colors? Not to mention how in the world can he smile or laugh? And look at the knowledge in his eyes.”

“I thought we would be done with the questioning of our land,” Hannah said. “There are no impossibilities here. Each of our species creates its own land. The unicorn’s happiness is found in the brilliant colors painted across their land. Unicorns, rainbows, and waterfalls. All the colors of the world. It brings them peace, like the forest brings the dryads.” She lifted from Zareena’s shoulder and fluttered next to Narus. “You have to believe anything can happen here.”

Zareena stared at Narus, into his big chocolatey eyes. A knowing passed between them. She wasn’t exactly sure what that was or what it meant, but she felt as if they had known each other for a lifetime. “I’m Zareena,” she said.

Narus whinnied and shook his head, stopping Zareena’s approach. He shifted his body back and went down to one knee, bowing? He rose to all fours and then glanced at Hannah.

“He thinks you should go into the water and wash off. He’d like to see your body without all the colors,” Hannah said and smiled. “He likes you.” She winked and giggled again.

“How do you know this?”

Hannah fluttered back to Zareena’s shoulder. “I’m a unicorn whisperer.” She moved closer to Zareena’s ear. “He desires for you to be his.”

“I’m not getting it on with a horse,” Zareena said. “I already told you.” She pointed at Narus. “I will not!”

“He’s not a horse. He’s a unicorn,” Hannah corrected.

“Either way it isn’t happening.” She stepped into the water and felt as if she’d entered another world. Everything in her mind cleared. No worries. No trepidations about leaving her world. No thoughts of the missing banshee or Simian. She

lowered her hand to the water and when she raised it, her hand was silvery. She raised her hand into the sky and watched the droplets race down her arm, washing away the colors.

She waded deeper into the water, her back to the unicorns, though she knew they had a good view of her behind. If Hannah, or Narus, thought she would lay with a beast they were both sorely wrong. But hadn't Simian been unhuman? And the banshee? What awaited her in the land of the unicorns she did not know or, at the moment, really cared. Her breasts dipped beneath the water, and she extended her arms out in front of her, pushing aside the water as she swam to the waterfall.

Her strokes toward the waterfall were simple like her life had become. She allowed herself to think about the past because without her past she would not know how beautiful her present had become. Her future awaited up north at the purple castle. To marry a king would mean her becoming his queen. The dream of every little girl.

Zareena stopped beneath the waterfall and felt herself being pulled upward from the water. Her breasts broke the plane of the water, and then her waist, legs, and feet. She could see the unicorns watching her. Could see Hannah relaxing on a rock, cleaning her wings. Up and up she went. It was no waterfall at all!

"Jump!" Hannah yelled. "Jump before you hit the top!"

Zareena raised her hands skyward and bent her knees. She dove forward, leaving the pull of the waterfall. The water below approached quickly, and she closed her eyes as she hit the glistening pool. She stayed beneath the water for as long as she could, swimming along the bottom, opening her eyes, spying tiny creatures darting around her. They danced and even sang and as they drew closer, and Zareena marveled at the small mermaids and mermen. The tiny creatures were as surprised to see her as she was of them.

She glanced up at the surface and the glittering sparkles of sunlight poking against the stillness. She neither struggled to swim nor struggled to breath. It was as if the world had turned upside down, and being in the water was as natural as being on land.

The small creatures continued dancing around her, reminding her of how the dryads interacted with one another when she first entered their village. Like the dryads, complete joy and happiness enveloped the underwater beings. It seemed that every one of them were equals, every one of them with a perfect partner. The scales comprising the lower half of their bodies shimmered blues, purples, and greens. The females—Zareena could tell them apart with large breasts and long hair—and males hugged and rubbed against each other passionately as if their partners were the single most important thing in their small aqua world. Had she ever been anyone's most important thing? Not that she could remember. Though the banshee had certainly staked a claim on her heart.

One of the females tenderly broke her embrace with her partner and swam toward Zareena. The small mermaid touched a splotch of color on Zareena's arm and gently pulled the patch away. The others quickly separated from their mates and swam to Zareena. In a matter of seconds, the mermaids and mermen had removed the swatches of colors from Zareena's body. The whole group swam away, the colors firmly being tugged along.

Zareena watched the small creatures and the colors disappear in the distance, beneath the waterfall. Remembering that the waterfall pulled water upward, she darted to the surface.

She watched with child-like excitement as the dozens of colors rose through the upward stream of the waterfall, eventually being thrown into the sky at the waterfall's apex, adding to the rainbow stretching across the land.

"If you're done playing in the water, Narus would like to speak to you," Hannah said, and landed on Zareena's shoulder. "He's an impatient sort. I think his offering is frustrated."

"I told you, I will not indulge in his offering."

"I do not think you understand."

Zareena remained where she was but turned to see the herd of unicorn watching her. Narus stood at the water's edge. "He's afraid to come in."

"Not at all," Hannah replied. "The water is magical."

"Magical? You mean because of those that live below the surface?"

"No, because of what it will do to him if he enters." Hannah flitted into the air. "Do not keep him waiting," she whispered.

Zareena nodded. "I will see what he wants." She slowly waded toward Narus, rising from the water, her breasts dripping, her nipples thick and dark. She continued, her stomach dripping, the patch of dark hair between her legs emerging next. Her slender legs, all of her, free of the colors that had marked her skin. She stepped from the water in front of Narus. She laid a gentle hand on his snout, almost jerking it away when tiny bolts of intense pleasure seeped into her skin. She ran her hand sensually up between his eyes, her fingernails impulsively seductive in their intentions. Her experience with the banshee had taught her to stand her ground, to not show weakness, that being the aggressor was certainly okay. "You wanted to see me?" she asked. Her voice was shy yet playful.

Not getting a response, she moved her hands along the unicorn's jaws and patted his neck.

The unicorn whinnied and stomped its right hoof. He nudged her stomach with his snout.

"Like what you see?" she said sarcastically.

Narus nudged her backward again and as he did so she lost her footing, and she fell back into the water. When she reappeared, her hair hung in strings down her face. She moved the strings back over her head and stared at Narus scornfully.

“That’s the way it’s going to be?” Zareena approached Narus again, and he lowered his head. “Now you’re going to be nice, or I’m continuing on my way. Got it? I didn’t come here to be pushed around by a horse.” She placed her hands on her hips, waiting. She turned to Hannah. “I thought he could communicate?” She looked at him again. “Maybe he is just a dumb animal!”

Hannah shrugged. “I think you made him mad.”

“Made him mad?! The asshole pushed me into the water!”

Narus snorted, whinnied, and raised onto his back legs. When he came down his horn was inches from Zareena’s face. He whinnied again but this time at Hannah. He knelt at Zareena’s feet.

“He’s bowing to me,” Zareena said. “That’s more like it.”

“Not hardly,” Hannah said. “He wants you to climb on.”

“What? No way.”

“Just do it before he knocks you back into the water.”

“I…”

Narus nudged her again with his snout this time against her thigh.

Zareena raised an eyebrow. The horse was trying to seduce her. Really?

“He’s not going away,” Hannah said. “You might as well climb aboard and see what he wants. Once again, trust what I tell you. He will not harm you.”

Zareena grabbed the unicorn’s colorful mane and hoisted herself onto his back, adjusting her bare ass so she stayed balanced. Narus stood, and she patted him on the neck. “Good horsey.”

Narus reared up again onto his back legs. Zareena clung on for dear life, wrapping her arms around his neck, the base of his neck fitting snugly between her legs.

Zareena closed her eyes, enjoying the unicorns vibrations as it snorted and whinnied.

“Don’t call him a horse,” Hannah said. “You need to work on your creature skills.”

“I think I’ll play the ‘new to the magical land’ card for my creature skills.” She furrowed her brow. “Does he really understand what I’m saying.”

Hannah nodded.

Narus nodded.

Zareena looked around the clearing. The other unicorns had run off. She edged up the unicorn’s back, closer to its neck, his fur soft against her bottom and lips. “Where’re we going?” she asked, not expecting an answer. Even in a land of the impossible becoming the possible, she did not expect Narus to answer.

The unicorn stepped to the left away from the water. Zareena caught one last glimpse of herself, of the beautiful woman on the back of a magnificent beast.

Zareena trembled, unsure of being on such a massive and powerful creature. Never mind that none of this was even remotely possible. Maybe she’d fallen asleep somewhere in the forest and none of this existed. She ran away from her life, but maybe she stumbled and hit her head. If that were truly the case, she never wanted to wake up. Maybe she could live in her own dreams.

The unicorn bolted away from the water, Zareena grabbing onto its mane, holding on for life. They raced through trees, around boulders, and up a steep mountain. Narus’ stamina was incredible as his breathing remained calm despite the steepness and height of the mountain.

She moved up on his back, pressing her pubis against the base of his neck as he ran. She gazed at his horn, the magical and hard phallus that would never go limp. It shined and glowed as Narus continued his gallop. She considered reaching out for the protrusion but feared falling from the beast’s back.

Try as she might, Zareena could not push Ursula or Simian from her mind. They had been magical lovers in a magical land, each pleasing in their own way, feeding her newly found appetite. Simian’s offering had been fervent and impassioned, creating a euphoria that had yet to wane. Ursula the banshee had been soft and erotic, the darkness of their lovemaking a bit more raucous and dirtier. What would it then be like with a creature such as Narus, whose horn beckoned her mercilessly?

They stopped at the apex of the mountain, and Zareena could see as far as the land could reach. To the north, of course, still stood the purple castle and her king. Though now she was beginning to doubt her need for a king. Life with the commoners wouldn’t be so bad. Remaining with the unicorns did not sound so bad at all. She could spend all day swimming in the pool at the base of the waterfall. She could use the colors of the flower fields to start painting once again, a hobby he insisted she stop. Yes, the land of the unicorns met all her needs.

Narus knelt and prodded, with his tail for Zareena to dismount.

Zareena jumped from Narus and walked to the edge of a stream that suddenly disappeared over the mountain side. “It’s the waterfall,” she said and leaned over, seeing only the pool of water. The other unicorns had disappeared. From this height

she could not see if Hannah had gone as well. Narus moved beside her and gazed down at the valley below.

“Is this why you brought me here?” she asked. “To see this?”

Narus shook his head and snorted. He rubbed a hoof in the dirt and turned away, looking back at Zareena to follow. They stopped in a small clearing, where the sun fed green, satin-soft grass, and warmed every blade.

Zareena looked at Narus. “If you cannot speak, how do I know your intentions? Surely you know I cannot lay with you. It would not be natural.”

Narus padded around in a large circle, staying close to the trees but watching Zareena.

“You know this, right?” Zareena insisted. “You know that I cannot do this. I don’t care what your rank is in this land. You are a horse.” She paused. “I’m sorry—you are a unicorn.”

Narus stopped pacing and faced Zareena. *You can hear me, yes?*

Zareena’s eyes widened. *I can*, she said but did not speak. *Telepathy?*

It is the unicorn way. Narus’ front legs buckled as he lowered himself. His back legs followed. *Please sit while we enjoy each other’s company. You will like the way our grass feels.*

Zareena watched the beast, her consternation growing. He wanted her. Hannah had said as much. She silently considered Helena’s words—the king wanted Zareena clean and untouched by anyone in his kingdom. She had already failed, though the first time was Helena’s fault just as much as it was hers. For the second time, she questioned Helena’s actions. Zareena had laid with two creatures already,

You still have not answered my question. Why have you brought me here? I think I should leave. But she did as Narus asked and sat across from him. Far enough that he could not reach her with his snout or horn. *You’re making this difficult.* She looked up at the sky and noticed the sun had yet to change positions since she left the forest.

Narus glanced at the sky. *Both the dryads and the banshee Ursula prefer both day and night. The unicorns prefer sunny days. Each of our individual lands are different.*

But there is something remaining the same throughout. I’m not sure what it is or why it is but have felt it since arriving here. You know, don’t you?

Narus nodded. *The place from which you came had both time and space. Our land only has space. For the past one-thousand years, time has stood still in this magical land. We can neither progress or digress.*

But this place feels warm and inviting, as if it could be home. She extended her arms out from her sides. *If time stands still so does the joy and happiness the land provides, meaning there can never be anything else.*

On the contrary. Nothing can become better without the advancement of time. Time must move for things in both past and present to be relative.

Zareena chewed her bottom lip. Surely he didn’t bring her here for a philosophical discussion. But she was intrigued and wanted to understand. She never saw herself returning to the human world, so the more she knew the easier the decision to stay. Though her heart felt empty without her father. Maybe if she understood the magical land better, and maybe once she met the king, then she could return for her father. But, of course, thinking of her father made her think of her mother who had passed years ago. She missed the strong relationship she had with her parents. She glanced around the wooded area. How would life be without human interaction? Would a king, a single human, be enough to feed the desire of human companionship? But then she realized she did not even know if the king was human.

She stared at Narus once again. *You know that I have a quest to meet the king? I shall not linger in your land for too long. I have been assured that he anxiously awaits me.*

You cannot travel that distance without rest and food. I offer you that now, here in the land of the unicorns.

You offer me that and only that? I was led to believe you wanted more. Much more than I can offer.

Narus snorted and raised his head proudly. He whinnied loud, and the sound echoed throughout the land. *What I offer cannot be matched by anyone you encounter here or in the other lands. Mine is special and as such only a special creature may have what I truly have to offer. It is unlike anything you have experienced or will experience. You are the chosen one, Zareena.*

Zareena glimpsed at Narus’ horn and noticed the end had changed. She considered leaning forward and placing her hand around the colorful tool. But instead she stretched out her legs and leaned back on her elbows, the heat of the sun washing over her naked body. She felt Narus rooting around inside her mind, so she relaxed and enjoyed the intrusion.

Though she couldn’t avert her eyes from the shapeshifting horn, she felt Narus’ eyes burrowing into her soul. She felt his mind moving faster inside her, searching the deepest, darkest reaches of her being, the place where people hid their secrets, thinking they could never be touched.

There is only one who can set time in motion in our land. Narus lowered his head. His horn—or what used to be a horn—stretched toward Zareena. *You are the chosen one to return Legendary to its original order. It is a quest only you can complete.*

Me? You’re mistaken, Narus. I’m nobody of any consequence to you or to the other creatures that live here.

Narus snorted and shook his head. *You are the one mistaken, Zareena. Your destiny is not one of running from or to*

anything or anyone. Your destiny lies here in Legendary and not necessarily with the king of Legendary. You will bring our land and our king back to prominence, though the land is much more important than the king. Without the land there is no king. Always remember this. And there are those in Legendary that are hoping you fail. You must be wary of everyone

Including you?

You will see that I care more about Legendary than anyone else who calls this home. I will give my life to see it returned to its original purpose.

You keep calling this place Legendary. Why?

We are the creatures that humans base their legends on, trite as those legends may be. And there are other lands outside Legendary and the human lands. Dark places, where evil reigns. Where evil wants to spread its wings to other lands, including Legendary. Only you can restore the magic that has been lost.

Zareena closed her eyes and took a deep breath of Legendary air. Her coming to this land had been no accident. And now, for the first time, she had a sense she'd been here before among these creatures. What could she, a simple human, do for Legendary? She had no powers like the dryads, banshee, or unicorns. She worked all day only to come home to a selfish, abusive husband, often locking herself away in her own mind, a self-made prison where nobody could get in and she could not get out. She had nothing to offer.

She had no doubt why Narus brought her up here alone. The ground around her shuddered, but she held her eyes closed. He was moving toward her, his aura disturbing the air around her. His horn nudged her leg, a carnal hunger deep within its sensual source. It snaked toward her, both stiff and soft. She laid back and let herself become part of Legendary. Reaching out, she found the end of the horn. It was no longer pointed. The end had morphed into something like the top of a mushroom. She wrapped her hand around the pulsating shaft, stroking it sensually. Narus whinnied.

Zareena pulled the horned-mushroom head between her legs, eyes closed, breathing so fast that her mind was beginning to cloud. She stroked all she could reach, her hands squeezing tightly, desperately trying to milk, desperately trying to guide the magical phallus between her legs. She raised her knees, keeping her feet on the ground, raising her bottom off the ground, whimpering as the mushroom-shaped head pressed against her opening.

As soon as the head spread her lips, Zareena's mind reverted to the past two days. The banshee and the fingers that danced around her opening, how the slick fingers greedily pressed inside her; how the fingers dug at the fleshy spot inside, the marble-sized erogenous spot her human lover was never able to find. The dancing of the banshee's fingers drove her salaciously over the edge.

She squeezed the head and felt it pulsate in her hand, the width growing as it suddenly propelled itself forward. She gasped for air but kept her eyes closed, remembering how Simian had grown inside her, his dryad cock beefy and alarmingly large, much larger than Simian himself. She recalled the warm feeling inside her, his juices expanding her insides like a balloon filling with water. She had dripped of him for hours, his milky-white dryad semen warm as it flowed down her leg.

Zareena writhed against the intruding horn, the pulsating phallus inflaming a desire much greater than that created by Simian or the banshee.

The head spurted inside her, and she squeezed the length of the horn, milking it brutally. Her hand slipped against the wetness, the undulating head continuing to empty into her. She jerked the head out and then plunged it back inside, rolling to her side and clamping her legs closed, never wanting to release the intense, plundering horn.

On her side, Zareena opened her eyes, seeing the waterfall through the trees, seeing magical creatures darting through the air, seeing...

Zareena suddenly stopped moving, her hands frozen in place. She squinted at the approaching figure and quickly sat up. Her heart beat so fast she was sure it would explode through her chest. The two-foot horn lay between her legs, Narus nowhere in sight. She wiped the glowing liquid from between her legs and slashed her hand through the grass.

The figure stepped through the trees and took up residence on a boulder twenty-feet from where Zareena sat.

At first Zareena thought the banshee had returned as the person was hidden behind a black cloak. "Ursula?" Excitement filled her heart.

The figure raised its hands to the hood and threw back the black covering, revealing a wrinkled woman who appeared older than the land they occupied. The hideous creature smiled, showing no more than a half-dozen teeth.

"I am Anitha," she said and bowed slightly. "You were having fun." She glanced at the unicorn horn, and her eyes brightened.

Zareena moved the horn to her side and turned on her behind to face the old woman. "It's not kind to sneak up on people like that. In fact, it's very rude." Zareena felt her cheeks warming, embarrassed. "What is it that you want?"

Anitha stood on wobbly legs and approached Zareena, her eyes dancing around, looking for the horn. "You seek the king in the purple castle?"

Zareena nodded. "I do."

Anitha knelt at Zareena's feet. "I can get you there by sunset tomorrow."

Zareena tightened her grip around the unicorn horn. "And what is the price I must pay?"

The old woman shifted to the right, searching for the horn with her eyes. “You have that which I have been seeking for nearly a thousand years.”

“I can find my own way,” Zareena said. That was not true, but she did not want the woman to sense any fear.

The old woman leaned closer, her breath pungent with a scent of death. Her head seemed to move across her shoulders as she glared. “I can protect you from the dangers of your quest,” she said impatiently. “You should fear those who roam the remaining lands. And only I can protect you from those who aim to harm you.”

Zareena swallowed hard. Where had Narus gone, and why did she still have his horn? She backed away from the old woman and moved to her feet. The woman stood as well.

“You do not have to go to the king,” the woman said. She took a step forward and then scanned the area before moving closer to Zareena. “You can have all the land to yourself. I will help you. I will help you gain all the power in this world. I will lay Legendary at your feet.”

Zareena looked toward the castle in the distance. It was closer now, though still days away. And there were still several lands she had to pass through. “Where had Narus run off to?”

The old woman grunted. “He is old and unwise. He did what he wished with you and has returned to his herd.” She pointed her finger at Zareena. “You, my dear, are on your own.” She cackled and then covered her mouth, stopping the deplorable shrieking. “But with my help you can get to the castle. You can have the run of Legendary.” She studied the horn in Zareena’s left hand. “All for a useless unicorn horn.”

Zareena squeezed the horn and found the head was once again dull at the tip.

“The satyrs. The ogres. The elves,” the woman said. “You cannot possibly make it through those lands on your own.”

Zareena glanced at the horn. She also wondered where Hannah had disappeared to. Hannah would know if the woman was lying. “I need to find my dryad friend. She was with me when I entered this land.”

“A young female?” the woman asked. “I saw a young female returning to the woods a while ago. I am all that’s left to help you find your way. The king will be pleased with your early arrival.”

“Anitha.”

The old woman turned toward the woods. A dozen unicorns appeared, Hannah sitting atop the head of the lead unicorn.

Zareena moved past Anitha and looked around the unicorns. “Where’s Narus?”

“He’s gone,” Hannah said.

Zareena’s knees buckled, but just as she was about to collapse to her knees, someone was trying to tug the horn from her hand. She turned and jerked the horn behind her back, sending Anitha sprawling backward to the ground.

The old woman jumped to her haunches with cat-like quickness. She eyed the horn and scowled. “Give it to me!”

The unicorns moved to either side of Zareena.

“Return to the woods, old woman!” Hannah demanded.

The unicorns, in unison, scraped a right hoof through the ground and snorted, horns lowered, ready to charge Anitha.

Anitha thought better of challenging the herd. She stared at Zareena. “Your time will come again.” She glanced at the horn one last time, disappointment clearly in her eyes. “You,” she said to Hannah. “The dryads should not have brought her here.” The woman spun on her heels and disappeared in a cloud of dust that zipped through the trees.

“Where has Narus gone?” Zareena asked. She remembered how Simian and the banshee Ursula vanished. Because of her. Narus, because of her.

Hannah zipped from the unicorn and landed on Zareena’s bare shoulder. “None of them are sure. They thought he was with you.” She nodded at the horn. “You have his offering.”

They looked at the unicorns to find the entire herd bowing on one front leg.

The unicorns parted, making way for Zareena and Hannah to pass.

“We need to go,” Hannah said.

“What are they doing?”

“They will be searching their land for Narus. We will only be in the way. You and I need to get back on the path and prepare ourselves for the satyrs.”

Zareena held the horn tightly in her hand as they passed by the unicorns, heading into the woods and down the hill, the journey moving once again.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Satyrs

Zareena took a last glimpse of Unicorn Valley before they stepped into the land of the satyrs. Things had certainly not gone to plan. Not that she had a plan to begin with. Narus had been an incredible creature, the horn in her hand a perfect representation of his power. Had she torn the horn from his head during her frenzied writhing on the ground? She'd been so absorbed in the delightful feeling that her eyes remained closed. She neither saw it come off nor saw Narus disappear.

Both Simian and Ursula had disappeared. Coincidence? That was what she thought until Narus vanished as well. Had she been the reason? When it came right down to it, so had her husband, at least the man she had married. Life in Legendary was turning out to be not much different than life back home. Trisha, one of her colleagues at work, warned her about being vulnerable to love. Trisha warned that getting too close meant getting hurt, though Zareena wasn't too terribly hurt by Simian's, Ursula's, or Narus' disappearance. Only confused. She was building a strength she'd lacked back home, loving herself before loving another. She refused to blame herself for the actions of others.

As she and Hannah followed the path, Zareena found herself smiling. What would Trisha think about Zareena's newfound carnal appetite? Trisha would say she was whoring around. But that was the furthest thing from the truth. The magic here. The creatures. The place each experience had taken her was beyond anything humanly possible. And she always felt in control. Though her friend Rita would claim the best sex came when you had no control, when you just let it happen and the pleasure becomes immeasurable. Her biggest regret by staying was that she would not be able to tell of her tales. She wanted badly to kiss and tale. Their stories had been so exciting, so satisfying. And now Zareena had similar, no, better stories to tell.

"You have something on your mind?" Hannah asked. "You've been quiet for a long time."

Zareena shrugged and smiled. "I was thinking about Simian. And Ursula." She giggled. "And Narus." Zareena stopped. "The legends back home say that a unicorn will die without its horn."

Hannah shook her head. "Not Narus. He's been around as long as any of us can remember. He let you have it, though none of us are sure why. I'm still not. But you know the rest of the unicorn story?"

Zareena shook her head. "Please tell me that which I do not know."

"It is said that when a unicorn loses his wings he goes to a place beyond all imaginations. It is in this place that he receives a new horn and wings. I am not sure of Narus' return, but wherever he is he is more powerful than anything in Legendary.

"This makes me happy," Zareena said.

"Narus had a reason for doing what he did."

"The old woman said something that has been on my mind," Zareena said. "Something about me being here before. And even Narus seemed to think I was some deliverer. It's like everyone I meet is counting on me for something I know nothing about. How could this destiny be mine if I never had any idea it existed? Tell me this, Hannah."

"The dryads also believe you're a deliverer. We believe you can restore the real magic that has been lost in Legendary. We just believe you are special and that you were sent here for a special purpose."

"Helena did not mention my reason for being here," Zareena said.

Hannah looked away and ducked her head like a turtle. "I do not believe she was happy with you being here."

Zareena frowned. "That cannot be so. She brought me to Legendary."

"That is not true," Hannah replied. "Legendary brought you to Legendary." She fluttered closer to Zareena. "Many females in Legendary wish to be with the king. But they all know only one can be close to him. That is you."

"I'm a foreigner to Legendary," Zareena said.

Hannah suddenly whisked away into the woods. "Keep on the path," she yelled. "I'll catch up."

"A deliverer?" Zareena said as she walked. "Not me. I prefer to follow rather than lead." She eyed the castle in the distance. Would she be expected to lead if her destiny really was in the castle?

She glanced at the horn and felt the phallus-like object pulse in her hand. It made her smile. Made her look around to see if anyone was watching. Of course, there was nobody. She giggled at the thought of the old woman being a horny old bitty, wanting the horn so she could get off alone in the forest somewhere. She looked around again and then pressed the tip of the horn between her legs. The electric feeling made her laugh out loud, a pleasurable laugh filling the land.

"I saw that," Hannah said and fluttered to Zareena's shoulder, carrying what appeared to be a belt of purple leaves. "To carry your horn, when you're not using it for pleasure."

The two females smiled at each other.

Zareena took the colorful belt and wrapped it around her bare waist. She then stuck the pulsing horn between the belt and her skin, the tiny jolts assailing her body stirring a desperate need between her legs. Back home she'd heard about women

wearing tiny vibrators in their panties during the day, the device activated by an app on their phone or a button they could carry in a pocket. She'd noticed at least one of the nurses in her unit using one. The nurse had been leaning against a patient bed when it accidentally went off one day. The patient woke to his nurse with her eyes rolling back in her head, the pleasure so intense she dropped to the floor.

Zareena adjusted the horn so the tip pressed snugly against her pubis. She glanced down and blinked several times. The tip had again turned into a throbbing mushroom head.

"We'll never make it to the castle if you're going to shake, rattle, and roll the entire way," Hannah said. "The distraction's going to get you in trouble."

Zareena moved the tip away from her crotch, and the mushroom head disappeared. "Something changed after my night with Simian," she said. "He ignited something that had been hidden so deep inside me I thought it would never be alive again. I've had an awakening that I can't explain. Like a new world has been opened to me. One that would never be accepted where I came from."

Hannah rolled her eyes. "Trust me, your race is a race of hypocrites. The very ones who judge are the ones hiding in the closet, watching pornography, secretly hitting the swinger scene, or attending some orgy in a warehouse on the edge of town while a babysitter watches their kids, a babysitter they are thinking of including in a threesome. We've seen what your kind do in their privacy, then turn around and blast another who may have gotten caught in some decadent behavior. Your world is not one I wish to enter."

"You've spied on us?" Zareena asked. "No, wait, don't answer that. I don't want to know what you've seen." She thought about the days she arrived home early, before *he* got home. She liked to do it in the recliner in the den with soft music playing, the lights low. She didn't dare have sex toys, always using her fingers. If *he* ever found something like a smutty toy in the house, there would be hell to pay. So she learned to use her fingers in an artful way, like an artist painting a masterpiece.

Of course, she'd made a mistake or two. Like the one time she left the curtains open and the UPS guy saw her as he walked up to the front door. She didn't know how long he'd been standing there. But, of course, he was standing there for her grand finale. Little did he know, every time after that, she imagined him watching her. She imagined what sort of package he had beneath his brown uniform. Those were the best times, her eagerness to please Mr. Brown.

She never spoke about her sex life to the girls at work since everyone's stories seemed so real, their fantasies nothing like anything she ever experienced. Mattie talked about her weekend at the lake with two guys and how eye-opening it had been. The smile on her face while she retold the story an indication that the experience had been nothing short of mind-blowing. Stephanie talked about S/M. She emphasized a true S/M relationship had willing partners, and she never partook in anything she didn't agree to. She added she never had to stop any of her "play" sessions due to extreme actions by her partner. Zareena didn't care to know what "extreme actions" were. Tasha was never shy about describing her use of a sex toy she called The Boss. She claimed The Boss took her from dry-to-wet-to-orgasm in less than sixty seconds. She called it the Porsche of sex toys. She even claimed during one masturbating session, The Boss leapt from her hand and shot across the room, buzzing through the bedroom and down the stairs, knocking out the cat on the way. She often complained about the toys made in China. They, according to her, didn't have the stamina she or her American-made toys had.

Zareena never told them the stories made her wet and horny. Like Mr. Brown, the stories were useful on those days when her fingers were her best friends.

Recalling the stories about Mr. Brown, and the girls at work, Zareena felt a bit of homesickness seeping into her mind. No matter how hard she worked to suppress those feelings, the longing seemed to hang around.

"You okay?" Hannah asked.

Zareena nodded. "Thinking about home. Kind of miss some things. Some people." She stopped walking, her naked body warm beneath the afternoon sky. What she wouldn't give for one of those ripe peaches. She kind of smiled, thinking about her time with Ursula. "Is there really something here for me, Hannah? I mean, what is it everyone expects me to fix or save them from? Everything in Legendary appears to be perfect. I'm afraid I'm going to disappoint those counting on me."

"You need to be you," Hannah said. "Yes, we think you are here for a reason." She pointed at the castle. It was much closer now. "That's where you'll be the most help. The king awaits you."

"So I'm told," Zareena replied. "You know, I had a dream about the king."

Hannah didn't look surprised.

"He didn't look like a king. Though it was dark, I could see a perversion sitting on the throne. The thing was some sort of hideous creature. Not a king at all." Zareena began walking again. "In my dream I ran away from it. Out of the castle and back home. I'm not convinced I'm doing the right thing."

"Just your nerves," Hannah replied. "This is all new to you. If you turn back now, you'll never truly understand why you're here in the first place."

"Have you seen the king? Has anyone in Legendary even met the man who claims their allegiance?"

Hannah shook her head. "No, I have not. Everything I know is what I have been told by Helena and a few others. Few if any of us in Legendary have seen the king. This is why I wanted to help you. It is my chance."

“It’s baffling that a king as great as he sounds does not come down off the mountain to meet those who worship him,” Zareena said. “You think he’ll want to do that because of me?”

“I am certain. We are all certain. You’ll see. I only ask that you trust me.”

Zareena wasn’t convinced but there was no changing Hannah’s mind. The dryad, like other creatures of Legendary, had made up their minds. “How much further to Satyr?”

Hannah sniffed the air. “From the smell of things, I’d say we’re pretty close. They are a filthy lot.” She flapped from Zareena’s shoulder. “We should talk about Tinum, their leader.”

Zareena crossed her arms beneath her breasts. “What about him? Is he bad like the others were supposed to be?”

“Well, for starters, he is half human half animal, though probably mostly animal. And not human in the sense that you are. He has some of your kinds features. But he’s also hairy, has hoofs, and a set of nasty horns that aren’t as impressive as the one you keep moving to between your legs.”

Zareena giggled. “You noticed?”

“Noticed? I can hear the tiny pulses assaulting you.”

“You think poorly of me? None of these things were remotely possible for me back home. I have enjoyed myself thus far. I plan to continue my enjoyment.”

Hannah paused before answering. “Legendary is not like the place you come from. We are not judgmental creatures. There are things here hard to resist. You’re not hurting anyone, including yourself. None of those you have been with have forced you to do anything. They are giving you their offerings. And whether you know it or not, you are giving an offering as well. When I lay with a male dryad it’s not about something being taken. It’s about giving. The act is natural to us.”

Zareena nodded but wasn’t sure if she totally agreed. Where she came from, females were taught not to act like men when it came to sexual pleasures. Essentially, men were dogs. But she also regretted her sexual repression, especially when the repression was based on what others thought. It had been no way to live her life. No, she would not have been with every male she met, but she thought about those she’d been attracted to and walked away from. That was really where she had made her mistake. And, of course, *he* was never one for fun in the bedroom. He’d been so insistent of the same old thing. She’d become bored with him, her just lying there, waiting for him to finish. But that wasn’t her fault. How many times had she mentioned spicing things up? Hundreds? Instead, he stuck to the same old routine. The thought of him made her shudder. She wanted a lover who could take her to a level of naughtiness they could never return from. She wanted that person who would always up the ante. Always challenge her ways and the way she thought. She needed that person in her life; otherwise, her life was no longer worth living. It had become important.

“They’re closer,” Hannah said and urged Zareena off the path. The two hid behind a large rock.

They peeped over the rock and saw three satyrs roaming a field nearby, eating and laughing. Moving back to the ground, Zareena looked questioningly at Hannah.

“What?” Hannah asked suspiciously. “You have something on your mind.”

“Well, first there was Simian of the dryads, then the banshee Ursula, and then Narus of the unicorns.” She glanced back over the rock. “Will I be with Tinum? He will be such a hairy beast. Like Narus, I am not sure it is possible.”

Hannah cocked her head and tried to spy the horn. “It’s making you into a sex maniac. Maybe you should get rid of it.”

“No way. I’ll keep it, thank you!”

“The answer is yes,” Hannah said.

“It will be the same with the ogres and the elves?”

Hannah nodded. “It offers the safest way through the lands.”

“What’s that look for?” Zareena asked, seeing the consternation on Hannah’s face.

“The satyrs are strange creatures. They do it in strange ways, ways the dryads and unicorns do not. Not even Simian has tried the satyr ways. He claims nothing should enter the exit.”

Zareena raised an eyebrow. “What pleasurable wickedness could they possibly command that is so different?”

“Look,” Hannah whispered. She rose to see over the rock.

Zareena peered over the rock and watched two female satyrs join the three males. The females circled the males, grunting and snorting, their large breasts swinging back and forth. Unlike the males, from the waist up, the females were hairless, their breasts and nipples like Zareena’s.

The females moved to all fours and each glanced at the males, who were one too many.

“This is where it gets good,” Hannah whispered. “It’s like one of your reality shows.”

Zareena had never been with two men at the same time but assumed that was exactly what was going to happen to one of the female satyrs. She reached down and positioned the end of the horn between her legs, squeezing as the end took on the shape of a phallus head. She shuddered when the tiny pulses zapped her clitoris. She wished she would have grabbed the UPS guy before she left and brought him along on her journey. She missed the fantasies she often had while sitting on the couch, thinking of him delivering himself to her. But being in Legendary did not mean he was forgotten. He had a special place in her heart.

Hannah tapped Zareena on the shoulder. "Really? Right now?"

Zareena smiled. "You should give it a try." She held out the horn, making her own offering to Hannah. "You will not regret it."

They turned back to the satyrs and when they did, two of the males were butting heads, their horns locked, their hands on the others' shoulders. Hoofs dug into dirt for better footing.

"They're fighting," Zareena said.

"Winner gets the other female," Hannah replied. "Loser will head to another field, hoping to find a female there."

While the two males battled, the other male hoofed it toward one of females.

"You might not want to watch," Hannah said. "They are a filthy species."

Telling Zareena not to watch was like giving her orders to watch or else suffer a brutal death. She watched intently, her intrigue urging her to move closer.

The satyr pushed aside the long hair hiding his genitals and dropped to his knees, his hooves kicking back grass as he steadied himself. The female pushed her behind toward him, and his offering disappeared into her hairy behind.

"It's how they control their population and still get all the pleasures from life," Hannah said.

"I take it the dryads don't do it like that?"

Hannah shook her head. "It's gross!"

"Calm down. Have you ever tried it?"

Hannah shook her head again. "No way! It is not natural." She shuddered and continued watching the satyr.

Zareena turned back to the satyrs. "Oh no!"

"Anitha," Hannah said. "She shouldn't be here!"

They watched Anitha suck in a large breath of air and then shoot her saliva-filled exhale over the five satyrs. The satyrs dropped to the ground. One of the female satyrs managed to crawl a few feet but eventually stopped moving. Anitha stood over them like a boxer standing over someone he had just knocked out. Her smile revealed rotted teeth.

"We have to do something," Zareena insisted. She started to rise, but Hannah quickly slid onto her shoulder.

"No!"

"Who is the old woman, really?" Zareena asked incredulously.

"She's the witch of Legendary. We do not speak of her."

"Yet here she is to speak of." Zareena sucked in a deep breath, and her brow furrowed. "Tell me the rest, Hannah. She's not just some old witch hopping around Legendary like some rotten child doing mischief. She was willing to kill for Narus' horn."

"You're right. She's not. And every creature of Legendary avoids her. We know to call for help when she appears."

"Why doesn't the king come down and stop her?" Zareena noticed the sky darkening. Nightfall was approaching quicker than it should.

"You've been told we have been around since before you and the people in your world," Hannah began. "Once upon a time in this faraway land, we were just like you. We were all humans. The first humans. We had a king and a queen. Our king remains. We no longer, as you know, have a queen."

"And you want me to fill those slippers," Zareena said.

"Yes, but you need to know the rest of the story." Hannah fluttered to the ground in front of Zareena. Her wings stirred the grass around her. "Nobody here knows where the witch came from, or how she was created. She showed up one day at the castle. She was beautiful with gold fleece-like hair. Her beauty was such that nobody in the land compared. Except one. The one was a young woman to whom the king had interest. The witch presented herself to the king but, despite her beauty, the king said he loved another."

Zareena moved the end of the horn away from her crotch and pulled her knees to her chest, fascinated by Hannah's story. "Please continue." She glimpsed at the stars above in time to see a white streak shooting across the sky. Her fairytale continued to grow. Her love for Legendary expanding.

"The witch went away for days. But then she returned. Her hair had been changed from golden to red. Her face was adorned with colors, and she smelled of scents never found in Legendary. The king again rebuffed her, saying he still loved the young woman and planned to marry her when she became of age. The witch was not pleased with his answer."

"Who was this young woman?" Zareena asked. "She lived in Legendary?"

"Over a period of a dozen days the witch kept returning, changing her appearance every time. But the king still rebuked her, claiming his love for the young woman." Hannah stared at the ground, her eyes almost weeping. "Then, on the first day of the next year, the witch returned one last time." Hannah raised her eyes. "She threatened to cast a spell on the king and all the land if he did not change his mind. The king did not relent. Again, he said he was in love with another. The woman would be of age soon. The witch cast her spell far and wide, engulfing every living creature. Every man woman and child."

"She changed the people," Zareena said. "Into what they are today?"

Sadness filled Hannah's face, and she wiped her tears. "We were all similar, not the creatures you've seen thus far. I sang

for the nobles in our land. I was supposed to marry. My voice hummed like angels from the sky above.”

“She took everything away from those in Legendary because of this mysterious woman for whom the king claimed his love?” Zareena asked. She wished to not think about who this woman might be.

“Yes.”

“Simian. Ursula. Narus,” Zareena said. “Were all human-like?”

Hannah nodded.

“What happened to the young woman?” Zareena asked. She thought she could figure it out but needed to hear the story from Hannah. She tried not to place blame on the shoulders of the woman.

“She was banished for a thousand years. She never saw the king after the witch’s curse. And neither the king nor the people saw the young woman again. Many search parties were sent out into the land to find the woman. But years passed, and the search was abandoned. We gave up all hope of ever finding her.”

“Until now,” Zareena interrupted. She raised her sorrowful eyes to Hannah. “The woman is me?”

Hannah lowered her head once again. “Yes, the woman is you. I’m sorry I did not tell you sooner.”

Zareena peeked over the rock to find the witch had disappeared, the satyrs lying dead in the field, their horns gone.

“She uses the horns in her potions,” Hannah said.

Zareena shifted her eyes to the unicorn horn. “And this?” she asked, raising the horn into the air. It no longer looked like a phallus.

“As powerful as the witch is, she’s never been able to convince Narus he should relinquish his horn. Never. It was her one mistake when she cast her spell. Narus’ horn is the only thing able to kill the witch. Narus was the most noble man in all the land. Some thought he should be king since the king’s sadness had overtaken him, his grief impeding his ability to lead.” Hannah finally let a smile cross her face. “It has been said that, as a human, Narus was built and looked like a great god.”

“She could have just cast a spell and taken it. Why did she not?”

“No, she couldn’t. To remove a horn from an unwilling unicorn means death to both unicorn and horn, rendering it useless. For centuries she’s tried seducing Narus but to no avail. Narus, like the king, claimed to be waiting on the chosen one, a woman of such beauty and splendor that he would have no choice but to bow to her and reveal himself.” Hannah flapped her wings and stood on top of the rock. “Part of the king’s curse was that he would be part of each species the witch created.”

Zareena held up her hands. “My dream about the king and the perversion I saw sitting upon the throne?”

“He is part of each of us.” Hannah lowered her eyes again. “And us a part of him. Though something has changed in the castle. None of us know what this change is as none of us have ventured close to its walls. Our leaders have talked but are weary of entering the castle.”

Zareena saw in her mind’s eye the image of the king from her dream. She closed her eyes. The king had wings and hoofs. His body hairy, his ears pointy and stretched back away from his face. He was muscular, but his muscles were dark and green and bumpy, his head wide and bald. Could she stomach being near such an abomination?

“We should find the other satyrs and warn them about the witch,” Hannah insisted. She started from the rock but stopped and stared at Zareena. “What is wrong?”

Zareena placed her hands across her chest and rubbed her shoulders. “My human father is not my real father,” she said. “I always thought...”

Hannah flapped her wings, and the air swirled. “We should go, Zareena.”

Zareena shook her head. “No. I want the rest of the story. As it stands now, nothing from my human life is real. And am I even human?”

Hannah shook her head. “It does not matter now.”

“It matters to me. It matters for whatever it is I must do next.” Zareena stared off into the woods. “Everything matters,” she said quietly.

“Once you crossed over to the human world, you were given memories as part of the witch’s curse. She wanted you to forget Legendary.”

“How did I end up with my human mother and father?”

“Naked, you walked from the woods and into their back yard. They had no other children. When they questioned you and realized you were an orphan of sorts, they took you in. They didn’t care you looked like an eighteen-year-old human. They dressed you and fed you. The witch’s curse erased your Legendary memories and gave you the ones that you have now of your human life. You became real to them.” Hannah lifted from the ground and sat on Zareena’s shoulder. “I’m sorry we didn’t tell you sooner. I was afraid you’d run back to your human home. We were all surprised when we found you in the first place. None of us from any of the lands knew what to do next except start you on this journey.”

“Why have those I’ve been with since my return disappeared?” Zareena felt lost and unsure of what else to say. Numbness worked through her brain and the rest of her body.

“That’s the only question I do not have an answer to. I’m sure Anitha is responsible in some way. We were used to Simian disappearing for extended periods. But something about this last time, when he left. It felt permanent. His ways since you were

found became strange to us. But he is our leader, and therefore we did not question his commitment to us.”

“Do the others know who I am?” Zareena asked. “Do they know I’m one of them?”

“Only Helena. She’s the one who worked so hard to get you this far. She’s the one who found you working in your backyard.” She darted from Zareena’s shoulder and glanced over the large rock at the dead satyrs.

“What will happen when the other satyrs find them? Who will they blame?” Zareena suddenly felt responsible for the disappearances and the deaths of the five satyrs. If she’d not come to Legendary, the satyrs would have never been murdered. If she had never been born the witch would have never cast a curse over Legendary.

“They will not blame us. They will know the witch has returned. She will want nothing more than to keep you away from the king and the purple castle. She knows who you are. But as long as you have the horn in your possession you will be safe.”

“And everyone else?”

Hannah moved around the rock, and Zareena followed. The two slowly approached the satyrs and looked around for the witch. The filthy scent of the satyr filled the fields and air.

“Everyone else will be in danger until she’s either dead or driven from Legendary.” Hannah flitted above one of the females. “It has been a thousand years since she killed.”

“And it is because I have returned,” Zareena said. She saw Hannah’s reluctance to answer. “It is true, Hannah. There is no need to hide truths that are so obvious.” Zareena covered her nose and mouth. “They do smell.” She knelt beside one of the males and checked for a pulse. There was none. She caught a glimpse of the unicorn horn as it glowed. She removed it from the leaf-belt. The vibration running up her arm made her teeth chatter. Narus chose her for a reason.

“It’s the satyrs,” Hannah said, staring at the unicorn horn.

“Move back.” Zareena stood. “It’s telling me to do something.” She placed both hands on the horn and slowly lowered it toward the satyr at her feet. The horn bucked and vibrated wildly. Zareena pressed the tip against the satyr’s chest, where she thought his heart should be.

The satyr convulsed and then sat up, staring at Zareena as if she were a ghost. “The witch Anitha,” he said, “where has she gone?” He ignored the other satyrs. He grabbed the rod he’d been holding.

“The others,” Zareena said.

“I’m not concerned with the others.” He looked Zareena up and down. “You are the woman from the other world?”

Zareena nodded. “How did you know?”

“The prophecy told of someone much more...” He paused and seemed to consider his next words carefully. “Someone more ... worthy.”

Zareena’s jaw dropped.

Hannah flew to Zareena’s shoulder.

Zareena took a step toward the satyr and poked him in the chest with her finger, her other hand on her bare hip. “I just saved your ass,” she said angrily. “Show some respect!”

The satyr crossed his arms. “What is an ass?”

Zareena looked at Hannah and then laughed. “He’s kidding, right?”

Hannah shrugged, obviously confused. “I know not what an ass is either.”

Zareena stopped laughing. She narrowed her eyes and then turned from the satyr. She tapped the other satyrs on the chest with the horn, and they jerked to life with a start. Each sat up and reacted the same as the first.

The first satyr moved forward. “They do not know about this ass you speak of.”

“We should go,” Hannah said. The witch may return. We’ll be safer in the satyr village.”

“You will follow us,” the first satyr said.

“Yes, we will,” Zareena replied in the same deep voice.

The satyrs glanced at each other.

Zareena followed the satyrs with Hannah riding along on her shoulder. The two glanced at each other and then covered their noses.

“You prefer to lead?” the lead satyr asked. “The smell will not be as strong.”

Zareena held back a giggle and declined. “No, you should be the first to enter your village.”

They entered a small village surrounded by a ten-foot-high stone wall. Zareena thought it odd in a land where there were unicorns, rainbows, and waterfalls, the satyrs needed a wall to protect themselves. Of the creatures she’d encountered thus far, the satyrs seemed the most capable of defending themselves.

Small buildings filled the village, and standing in the doorway of each village were a male and female satyr. Zareena noticed the obvious. There were no young satyrs.

“That’s Tinum,” Hannah said of the creature exiting one of the buildings, no mate anywhere near him.

Zareena stood still while Tinum walked circles around her, sniffing her hair, her behind, and finally her crotch. Using the rod in his left hand, he tapped her ankles, encouraging her to spread her legs. Zareena did as suggested and watched Tinum drop to all fours.

“The males worship the female bush,” Hannah whispered.

“That’s pleasant.” Zareena said.

Tinum moved closer to Zareena and shoved his nose between her legs. He sniffed hard, but Zareena refused to show any fear. If he went any further, he’d find out the power of the unicorn horn.

“You are on your way to see the king?” Tinum asked. He puffed out his chest and stood upright, proud of his filthy body.

After the last few days, Zareena felt empowered. She and she alone controlled her destiny. “I am,” she said. She stared into Tinum’s eyes when he stood. “You will supply me with food and shelter for the night. I will continue my journey in the morning.”

Tinum said something to another satyr, and the creature immediately returned to one of the buildings. “Rien will get you food. You will take rest in my dwelling.” He looked around at the other satyrs. “The rest of you take leave. Guards take your places. The witch is lurking.”

The crowd of satyrs scattered, leaving Zareena alone with Tinum and Hannah. Zareena’s stomach rumbled.

“Follow me,” Tinum said and turned away.

“He’s not much of a host,” Zareena said to Hannah and then followed.

The satyr’s dwelling was a single room much like the cottage she’d stayed in the first night with the dryads, except the only place to sleep was a pile of hay in the corner of the room. Rien entered with a tray of fruit and nuts.

“Dryad, take leave,” he said.

Hannah didn’t move. She shifted her eyes toward Zareena.

“Dryad, take leave,” Tinum said again, more forcefully.

“It’s okay,” Zareena said. “I can take care of myself. I’ll kick his ass if he gets out of line.”

Hannah fluttered from Zareena’s shoulder and darted past Tinum’s ear. “You harm her in any way, and I will kick this ass she speaks of as well.” Hannah left them alone.

“That was rude,” Zareena said. She took a grape from the tray and popped it into her mouth. The rich purple fruit burst in her mouth when she bit down. The taste was even better than the peach she’d been given by Ursula.

“The dryad are a dreadful species.” Tinum took a seat on the hay. “Please sit.”

Zareena sat on the hay as well, keeping her eyes on the creepy satyr. When he stretched out his legs, she covered a laugh with her hand.

Tinum glanced down, seeing his manhood laid out close to his knee. “You like?” he asked.

“You have a large offering,” Zareena said. At first, while watching the satyrs in the field, she had been repulsed by the creatures. But now she understood. They were not creatures by their own choice. Simian as well had once been a real man.

“Tinum,” a satyr said from the doorway. “Guards are in place, and the dust has been spread atop the walls.” The satyr bowed. “Anything else?”

“Take leave,” Tinum said. “I have many things to discuss with this woman.”

“Dust?” Zareena questioned.

“When you entered our land, you saw the blue locum tree?” Tinum asked. Zareena nodded. “The witch cannot get within ten feet of the tree without catching fire.”

“When I saw her, she had burns on her arms.”

Tinum nodded. “Last evening, she tried to scale the wall. We heard her screams in the night. Our finest carpenters carefully remove the tree’s bark and grind the bark into dust. One of our daily tasks is to keep the wall and front gate covered with that which repels the witch.” He gazed at Zareena. “We have only had to do this in recent times.”

“Because of me,” Zareena said.

Tinum nodded.

Zareena reached for another grape and noticed Tinum scoot a little closer, his offering dragging between his legs. She wanted to laugh out but steeled herself. Surely the foul creature did not think she would allow him inside her.

“Where will I sleep this evening?” Zareena asked and covered her yawn with her hand. Tinum noticed the unicorn horn again, and his eyes grew wide. Zareena quickly dropped her hand to the side and tucked the horn beneath her leg. She felt the titillating pulses dance against her skin. Her nipples grew, and her breasts hardened. A wetness built between her legs. She could smell the sweet scent of her arousing sex.

“Here, of course,” Tinum said. The satyr leader tilted his head upward and began sniffing the air. His eyes narrowed, and he suddenly shifted to all fours. Zareena leaned her head slightly to the side and saw his hard offering.

Zareena backed toward the wall and shoved the horn behind her. She felt the tip morph, and as she felt the length of the horn, she found the tip had changed. She leaned forward even as Tinum continued sniffing the air. His eyes were closed, but his snout was leading him toward her. For no reason she could understand, she gently slipped the end of the horn beneath her behind and then leaned back. The horn thickened. Tinum sniffed at her feet. She recalled what had happened with the other leaders of the different lands.

She watched Tinum with little interest, but part of her knew what she must do. Though she knew not what would happen at

the end of her journey, she guessed she had purpose in each of these lands.

Zareena looked toward the open doorway but failed to move. Her journey could not continue until she lay with Tinum. The horn assailed her juicy lips, spreading them, the wetness that had grown within pooling on the ground beneath her.

Tinum violently jerked his head to the side. Zareena guessed he had caught her scent.

Zareena rocked back and forth, feeling the end of the horn suddenly take an upward turn. "My gosh," she whispered. Her body shook. She fought the agonizing desire to squirt, knowing it would drive the satyr insane. She watched Tinum, whose nose was now at her knees. The tip of the horn engorged and began to move inside her. She felt the delightful warmth growing at the center of her core.

Tinum moved closer to the scent, his nostrils flaring as he moved against her thighs. Zareena shuddered against his face.

She closed her eyes, writhing against the horn's incursion. She let out a delirious cry and moved her hand away from her quivering lips.

Just as Tinum's snout found the creamy lips of his desire, a flood of tangy juices washed across his face.

Zareena felt as if she were floating amongst the stars. She also felt Tinum turn her over. His arm slipped beneath her stomach, and he moved her to all fours. Narus' horn still pulsed inside her.

Tinum grabbed her hips and the hair around his offering brushed against Zareena's legs and behind. He held his offering in his hand and lathered it with his own saliva.

Zareena, still mesmerized by the horn, wiggled her behind against Tinum, urging him to take her. She remembered the female satyr in the field. She remembered the male entering her, and Hannah's reaction. She had never been taken in such a way. The girls at work talked about the act. Some enjoyed the bestial act, others declined the opportunity. She often fantasized about the outrageous behavior especially with Mr. Brown.

The warmth of Tinum's saliva around her opening made it contract and then relax. With her left hand she continued moving the horn in and out. It helped calm her as she waited. He pressed against her. Her opening slowly gave way. She cringed and then eased back on Tinum's offering. The head of his offering entered her. His saliva made the movement easier. She could feel him against her walls. The pain subsiding.

The end of the horn grew larger and began to move on its own. She pushed against Tinum again. She tried to remember how long his offering was. His hips pressed against her behind, and she sighed. She looked at him, the half man half something else. He held her steady, being careful with her.

"You must give it to me," she said. "I know this."

Tinum nodded. Zareena removed the horn but kept it in her hand. It dripped from her excitement.

He eased back, and Zareena moaned. Each inch felt tantalizing good. The pressure inside her grand and enrapturing.

"Back in," she whispered.

Tinum pushed forward and when he pulled back again, he covered his offering in another layer of saliva. He placed his hands on her back and massaged her tensing muscles. Zareena relaxed and threw back her head. Her hair stretched down her back.

"Again," she said.

Tinum placed his hands around her hips again, and this time he pulled her back as he moved forward. Zareena moaned loudly, the sinful and impure act feeding a growing need. His gentleness made her want him. At first sight she never would have imagined a creature such as Tinum could be so gentle.

They moved together, his saliva-covered offering impaling her, the perversion driving them both toward ecstasy. Zareena moved back harder, wanting the same from Tinum.

"Harder, my love," she pleaded. "Harder, my love."

Tinum obeyed and met Zareena's forceful movements with equal or greater force.

Together they moved, and together they came.

Zareena pulled forward as Tinum made his liquid offering, Zareena allowing his gushes to fill her as he continued to pull away.

She felt Tinum's offering slap between her legs, leaving behind a trail of wetness. She laid on her stomach and held his deluge deep within her.

"Thank you," Zareena whispered.

"Your journey is almost complete," Tinum said. The satyr stood and left the room.

Zareena closed her eyes and dreamed.

The castle gates stood open. The king was nowhere to be seen. Zareena passed through the opening and stood at the well in the center of the castle courtyard. She watched the entrance in front of her. The dark opening waited. Of course, she hesitated, knowing what would be inside, sitting on the throne. Her king. Or the perversion of the king she had been destined to be with.

"I know why I am here," she said. "I am she. I am the woman who caused these troubles. I am here to see you and stop

what has happened.” She moved around the well and approached the open entrance. She climbed the two stairs and stood at the precipice of darkness.

“You may enter,” the king said.

Zareena took three steps into the darkness and stopped, letting her eyes adjust. Even in the blackness, she could see the outline of something sitting on the throne at the far side of the room.

“You are afraid of me,” he said. “I am better than before. You shall see.”

“I’m sorry, my king. I did not mean to offend you.”

“Do not be silly, my queen. I do not even look at myself in the mirror.” He shifted on the throne. His large form filled the seat. She could see the silhouette of his large ears and bulky head and muscles. “I will remain in the darkness so you may approach without trepidation.”

Zareena moved forward a few more steps and stopped. “I am closer,” she said. “I will be here soon.”

“Zareena, you must trust your instincts. Legendary is full of deception and treachery.” He moved on the throne again. “You must pass through the land of ogres quickly, and through the land of elves even quicker. I love you, Zareena. It’s time you take your rightful place on the throne with me. I have been lonely.”

Zareena took another step forward. “What is your name, my king? And where do you come from?”

“I am your king, my queen. I am almost as old as time itself.” He bowed his head. “As are you.”

Zareena bowed her head as well. “I am naked, my king. I hope you approve of what you see.”

The king sat back and placed his arms on the arms of the throne. “Since the first day, I have approved of what I see. It was not I who caused the great deceit. It was not I who spread despair across the world. But it is us, my queen, who shall return the world to its proper place.”

“I think I should not wake, my king. My dreams satisfy me so.”

The king shook his head vehemently. “No, my queen, you must wake and face your destiny and complete your journey.” The king stood and, even in the darkness, Zareena could see the king’s deformities. “Beware, my queen, the path you follow is full of deceit, lies, and those in sheep’s clothing. Trust only you.”

“I shall remain then.”

“No, dear one. You have come far enough. I have bothered your dreams too much. Return to your sleep and the satyrs.”

A blanket of sheer blackness fell over the room. Zareena backed away from the darkness and as she did so, screams filled her head.

Zareena opened her eyes in time to see Rein entering the small room. Fright filled his face, and his eyes were wild with confusion.

“Tinum? Where has Tinum gone?” the satyr questioned. “The witch is at the gate! The witch is at the gate!”

Zareena grabbed the unicorn horn and stood. “He was here before I slept!” She followed Rein outside and could see the satyrs moving in all directions toward the walls surrounding the small village. Rein approached the closed gates. A torch-holding satyr stood at the ready on each side.

“It’s the witch,” Hannah said as she floated toward Zareena. “She does not look happy.”

“The locum dust will keep her away,” Zareena replied. She pointed at the top of the wall. “It is all along the barrier. She cannot enter.”

Hannah shook her head. “She’s not alone.”

Zareena and Hannah joined Rein at the gate, where they could see the witch twenty-yards away.

“Who’s with her?” Zareena asked.

“Ogres,” Rein said. “They’ve never left their lands before.” He turned to the satyr standing next to him. “Prepare the satyrs.” He scanned the small village. “Tinum is gone.”

“Rein,” the witch called. “I only want the woman and the horn. The satyrs are free to live in peace.” She moved closer to the gate, several ogres next to her. “Send the woman forward, and no harm will come to the satyrs.”

“You cannot harm us, witch,” Rein replied.

The two ogres next to the witch approached the gate, and the satyrs at the gate backed away, afraid. The ogres were monstrosities that turned Zareena’s stomach. They were large and muscular, but the muscles were dark green and gray and made them look like creatures from an awful abyss. They wore cloths around their privates but were otherwise naked. She took a step closer to the gate and realized that her king had the same deformities as the ogres, though her king had had the ears of an elf.

Seeing Zareena approach the gate, the two ogres stopped and turned to the witch, unsure of what they must do.

“She is your enemy,” the witch said. She floated between the two creatures. “Give me the horn, and the satyrs will be saved. Do not, and they will all die.”

“What is it that you want with me, witch?” Zareena said defiantly. “Surely you want more than a unicorn horn.”

Anitha moved closer. Her eyes shifted to the tops of the walls where locum had been spread. She eyed the gate and the fine

line of locum spread across the top brace. "I was before you," she said. "I will be after you."

Zareena turned to Hannah. "What is it that she means?"

Hannah fluttered to Zareena's shoulder. "Elders tell of a time long ago, before any of us roamed this land. There was only one man in all of the land. A lonely man. He begged the universe to send him a partner to take away his loneliness." Hannah looked at the witch but quickly averted her gaze. "A woman was sent to please the king. To wash away his loneliness."

"The witch," Zareena said.

"Yes," Hannah replied. "The man was not pleased with her, she not pleased with him. She left the man. But before she left, she swore to the man that she would put a curse on both him and the land. A second woman appeared. A beautiful woman. She and the man had three children, and from those children the world was populated."

"The curse?" Zareena asked.

"The first woman, hearing of the man's happiness, returned. She kept the promise she made to place a curse on the man and the land. She sent the woman away, never to return. She gave the man another opportunity to change his mind. The man did not relent."

"I'm growing impatient," the witch said.

"The witch was also the first woman?" Zareena asked.

"That is what the elders have told," Hannah said. "She was denied by the first man and the first king of Legendary."

"But why am I back?" Zareena asked. "It is truly believed that I can help Legendary reclaim its prominence? The witch is unrelenting."

"The leaders of each land saw legendary beginning to falter. The king has not been seen for many years. As I told you, they were afraid to enter the castle to see for themselves. Some thought he had died alone in his castle. Others claimed his loneliness had consumed him, and he no longer cared for Legendary. But again, all stayed away from the castle."

Zareena nodded. "The leaders searched for me."

"As I have said, they believe you can restore the king to his prominence, and he will then have the power to rid Legendary of the witch."

"I saw the king in my dreams once again," Zareena said. "He is changing. He is becoming more human."

"You must complete your journey, Zareena. You must still pass through the land of ogres and continue through the land of the elves. It is the only way to restore Legendary and the king to power." Hannah zipped to the gates and stared at the witch. "You will not take her."

The witch moved closer. "Such beautiful creature you are," the witch said to Hannah. "I shall cover you in the finest spices and cook you over an open fire. I will tear you apart and eat even your tiny bones." She pointed at Zareena. "Now give her to me and be gone with yourself."

"Ogres," Hannah said. "Zareena is your true queen. You deny her rightful place on the throne next to our king." She pointed at Zareena. "She and only she has the power to return the creatures of Legendary to their original form. Including the ogres. The witch will not fix what she has done to any of us."

The ogres glanced at one another and then at the witch, realizing their mistake.

"Do not listen to her!" the witch chided.

The closest ogres moved away from the gates and motioned for the other ogres to move back into the forest. The witch held her ground, her face screwed up in hatred. She glared at Zareena. "Your return has done nothing for these creatures. You have given them false hope. I and only I can release the curse on this land. You will die on the throne next to the king. You have made it so." The witch swirled in a cloud of smoke and disappeared.

"She did not give up," Hannah said. "I expect her to appear again before the purple castle."

"I hope so," Zareena said. "She is afraid of me and the unicorn horn. She will not harm me as long as I have it in my possession."

Rein approached the gate. "Be gone, ogres. You're not welcome here." He turned to Zareena. "Where has Tinum gone?"

"He was with me when I fell to sleep and was gone when I woke." Zareena joined Rein at the gates. "Ogres," she yelled. "Do not leave."

"I gave an order, Zareena," Rein said. "And as long as Tinum is not here, I am the next in charge."

Zareena placed her hand on Rein's shoulder, and he calmed. She watched the two ogres approach. One stopped, the other continued forward. He stopped on the other side of the gate, in front of Zareena. She looked up at the large creature and guessed him to be at least ten feet tall.

"What is your name?" Zareena asked. She reached through the gate and placed the palm of her hand against his chest. His heart beat slow but hard against her hand.

"Korlor," the ogre said. "The leader of the ogres."

"Thank you," Zareena said.

"You are our queen," Korlor replied. "We will do as you wish. We are sorry for letting the witch cloud our minds. Please forgive us."

“I do.” Zareena shook her head. “I must complete my journey in order to be considered your queen. I thank you for keeping peace with the satyrs. The witch is an enemy to us all.”

“You will be coming to the ogre lands?” Korlor asked.

Zareena nodded. “I will come to the ogre land in the morning. Prepare your people. Let them know I am there to help them and not to bring trouble from the witch.”

Korlor moved his hand beneath Zareena’s hand on his chest. He kissed the back of her hand and released it. “The ogres will prepare a place for you.” He stared into Zareena’s eyes. “And I await you, my queen.” He moved away from the gate, and he and the other ogres disappeared into the forest surrounding the satyr village.

Zareena stepped away from the gates and, with Hannah on her shoulder, returned to Tinum’s dwelling.

“You have no idea where he went?” Rein asked. He snorted his displeasure when Zareena shook her head. “It is said that because of you each leader in the lands you have visited have disappeared. Tinum is no exception.”

Hannah shot from Zareena’s shoulder and stopped within inches of Rein’s face. “Do not speak to her in such a manner.” She poked him in the nose, and he swatted at her with his dirty hand. Hannah swooped to the right, and he missed.

Zareena approached quickly, standing nose-to-nose with Rein. She could smell hay on his breath. She felt his offering rise up her thigh. He moved closer to her, his stench stronger. She removed the unicorn horn from the belt Hannah had made and held it beneath Rein’s chin. He stepped back without her saying a word. She glanced down and smiled when his offering shriveled up and disappeared into his fur.

“My apologies,” he said and bowed. “I do not know what overcame me. You are my queen. and I am faithful to your cause.”

“I do not know why the leaders have vanished,” she said. “I have done no creature any harm. My journey is to the purple castle. My quest is to make the land better for us all.” She searched his eyes. “Do you understand?”

“Yes, my queen.”

“I believe the satyrs are safe from the witch for tonight. I will leave in the morning and therefore do not believe she will return here to cause the satyrs any harm. She will follow me to the next land and the land after that. She will not stop until we are all inside the castle and she has tried to take the throne. I do not believe she requires only to be the queen.”

Rein nodded. “Again, my apologies. I will have the guards remain in place until you take leave in the morning. Please let me know if you have any other needs.” Rein bowed his head and left the room.

“He is a filthy creature,” Hannah said.

“They are afraid,” Zareena replied. “I do not fault him for his concern about the satyrs or Tinum.” She sat on the hay in the corner of the room and leaned against the wall. “The witch is waiting in the woods. She’ll follow us tomorrow.” Zareena faced Hannah. “It is best that you wait here.”

Hannah placed her hands on her hips. “I will do no such thing, Zareena. We will do this together. I left the dryads to help you complete your quest. That’s what I will continue to do.”

“Okay,” Zareena said. She studied the unicorn horn. “It is the only thing keeping the witch from harming us. Do you know why? What is its power?”

Hannah flew to Zareena’s shoulder. “There are things in each land that she must have. These things will make her more powerful than our king. The unicorn horn has the power of life and death. Nothing else in Legendary can bring a creature back to life except for the unicorn horn. Nothing else in all of Legendary can change this world or the next or even your world.”

“The horn will work in the world I left?” Zareena asked.

Hannah nodded. “That is what we have been told.”

The thought of the magic working in her old world planted a seed in her mind. “She knows if she kills the king, I could bring him back with the magic of the unicorn horn,” Zareena said.

“And as long as the king is alive, he will own the throne. You sitting on the throne with him makes the throne twice as powerful. Together, you will have the power to banish her from Legendary for all eternity.” Hannah began a dryad song, soothing Zareena’s heart. The song praised Zareena and the king and the change that would take place in Legendary.

Zareena closed her eyes and listened to Hannah sing. She thought about the witch. She had sensed an evil in the woods around the dryad village but had not mentioned the feeling to anyone. It bugged her that the witch knew so much. How had the witch known when she came into the dryad forest for the first time? She opened her eyes and turned her head to watch Hannah. The dryad had disappeared on several occasions during their journey. And Zareena could have killed the witch with the unicorn horn when the witch attacked the satyrs in the field. She was sure of it. Hannah had made her refrain from stopping the witch.

With Hannah still on her shoulder, Zareena lay her head on the hay and stretched out. The dryad stayed on her shoulder and continued to softly sing. Zareena closed her eyes and hoped to dream of the king once more.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Ogres

A ray of sunlight found its way into the small room and warmed Zareena's face. She opened her eyes and took a deep breath, smelling hay and musk but not smelling a satyr. The king had not appeared in her dreams last night. This caused a brief disappointment, but she knew her journey would eventually take her to him, and there would no longer be a need for dreams.

Zareena sat up and hugged the unicorn horn between her breasts. She kissed the tip, and it transformed into the head of a phallus. She giggled and licked it like a lollipop. It vibrated between her lips. She leaned a little to the left to see if anyone from the outside was watching, including Hannah. Through the power of the horn she felt as if Narus was still with her, that the horn remained a live extension of him.

She held the horn out and studied it. The head reached two inches wide, the length at least eighteen inches long. She licked the tip again, and the shaft of the horn widened. "You are a mysterious thing," she said to the horn. She looked toward the room's entrance again. She cared not if others saw her desire for such a thing.

Zareena closed her eyes and saw them standing in a line against a wall. Simian, Narus, Tinum, and Mr. Brown the UPS guy.

She reached between her legs with her free hand and touched herself. She looked at the four standing against the wall and spread her legs wider. Mr. Brown's pants were the first to bulge. His package was ready to be delivered, she ready to sign and accept. Her eyes shifted to Tinum. She scooted her bottom forward and leaned back, letting him see her rear entrance. His offering perked quickly from his hairy body. She enjoyed teasing the creature.

Simian watched her as he floated in the air and as his erection grew larger, he struggled to remain in the air. Zareena giggled and briefly covered her mouth.

She smiled at Narus and waved the unicorn horn before placing it between her legs. The tip of the horn grew wide as it pressed at her opening. She moved closer to the four and laid on the ground in front of them. Her hips rose and fell to the intruding horn, the head a tighter fit than she remembered. She worked the horn in and out of herself, the vibrations from the horn spreading tiny, decadent pulses between her legs.

Zareena closed her eyes, yearning for Mr. Brown and his package. "Come to me," she said to him. "Come to me and please your queen."

Mr. Brown moved to his knees and grabbed the end of the horn. Zareena loosened her grasp of the horn and let Mr. Brown shove it into her. His strokes were steady and meticulous. His offering grew and when she glanced at him, she grabbed his offering, yearning to have the hardness inside her. She pushed him back and grabbed the unicorn horn. The others watched, their offering stiffening.

Zareena crawled over Mr. Brown and lowered herself onto him. His package delivered, she moved up and down on the slick tool. "Tinum," she beckoned and prepared herself.

Keeping Mr. Brown inside her, Zareena lowered herself, opening her bottom to the creature, her lips hungrily on Mr. Brown's. She closed her eyes, listening to the wet sounds of Mr. Brown moving in and out, titillating her ears.

Tinum moved over Mr. Brown's legs, his hoofs digging into the dirt-laden ground. He lowered himself and moved his offering to Zareena's behind. He rubbed a layer of saliva on his offering and gently moved the head inside her, careful not to hurt his queen.

Zareena winced and then pushed back on Tinum, Mr. Brown's offering almost escaping. She squeezed around Tinum's offering and worked back and forth, her body regulating and accommodating the movements of both Tinum and Mr. Brown. She gyrated against the two, fervently working for their liquid offerings.

She opened her eyes and motioned for Simian to draw near. He fluttered close to her, hovering around her face, his engorged offering almost bouncing against her forehead. Zareena moved her mouth up, her body working easily to keep Mr. Brown and Tinum inside her and closed her lips around Simian. His offering shuddered inside her mouth. She sucked him hard, whetting her appetite for the small creature who had disappeared.

Zareena closed her eyes, the naughty tryst feeding a ravenous need she'd buried long ago. She swayed with the three offerings, the splendid feeling of so many inside her beautiful, natural, and appetizing. She gasped when the three thrust harder, the ecstasy mind-bending, her wet holes consuming what they were being given. She bowed her back and then pushed down hard on Mr. Brown. She bucked back and slammed against Tinum. She closed her lips hard around the base of Simian's offering and moved her mouth back. Her three companions moaned simultaneously.

Zareena breathed deeply and opened her eyes, staring deviously at Narus. The unicorn lowered its head and with all holes filled, she reached up and placed the horn back where it belonged.

Narus whinnied and steadied himself, his head lowered, Zareena stroking the phallus.

Zareena's mind soared, her enlivened body floating through clouds of lust, her lecherous movements prodding the four with her. Her body accelerated, moving fast and hard over stimulating the four males.

The explosions were sudden, massive, and lewd. She swallowed Simian's expulsion, drinking him like a fine bottle of wine, his taste exquisite and satisfying.

Narus' horn filled the air with a rich and creamy spurt, bathing Zareena. His stuff tantalized her skin, causing her to release the horn and run her fingers through the shower of juices. She cried out in ecstasy and prepared herself for the other two who were deep inside her.

She felt Mr. Brown's heated spurts. The deluge filled her, the pressure against her insides great and powerful. Tinum released his own explosion, filling her behind.

The two males pulled from Zareena, and she collapsed to the floor, spent but deliriously speeding toward a euphoria that would consume all that she was. She saw the bright sky, clouds, and then stars. She saw rainbows and forests and peaches. She saw the kingdom of Legendary and all its people. But she did not see its king.

"Zareena?" The voice was distant, far away from the place Zareena now roamed. "Zareena?"

She opened her eyes and found Hannah floating over her. She glanced around the small room and struggled to catch her breath. "Where are they?"

Hannah turned in a circle. "Who?"

Zareena closed her eyes and tried to regain her composure. She then opened her eyes and watched the horn return to normal form. She ran her fingers between her legs and found her own juices.

Hannah watched, confused. "It is late in the morning," she said. "We should begin our travels."

Zareena nodded and stood. "Tinum did not return?"

"No," Hannah said. "The satyrs began a search this morning, but I am sure he will not be found." She moved to Zareena's shoulder.

Zareena left the small building and headed toward the open gate. The satyrs watched, but none approached or said anything.

"You can find the path?" Zareena asked.

"Of course," Hannah said. She fluttered ahead, and Zareena followed. "You were having fun?"

Zareena giggled. "The horn has strange powers." She followed Hannah closer. "I closed my eyes and saw Tinum, Simian, and Narus." She left out the part about Mr. Brown. A dryad would not understand.

"Where? What were they doing?"

Zareena smiled shyly. She put her hand on the unicorn horn to make sure it was secure. "They all gave me their offerings at the same time."

"It cannot be!" Hannah said excitedly. "No creature in this land could take that many offerings at once! You are indeed a queen."

"It was a dream, silly." Yes, it was a dream, but Zareena could feel her body getting worked up again, thinking about it. She doubted that it would happen in real life. Unless, of course, Mr. Brown had a delivery in Legendary. She imagined his truck driving along the path to the castle. She imagined him hopping out in his brown shorts and shirt, a package in his hands and a package in his shorts. She smiled and let the thoughts of the man consume her. He was tall with blond hair and green eyes. He was not muscular but fit in his own way. He wore silly brown socks that she really wished he would change to white. She thought about his strong hand as he held the small device for her to sign her name. Maybe someday she would see him again. No, her destiny was leading her to the castle and to a king she had never seen.

They stepped onto the path leading to the purple castle. "Tell me about the place you came from," Hannah said. "What was it like?"

Zareena wanted to forget her entire experience in the other place. None of it had been real, except for the man she married. Had that been the witch's doing. The memories had. She even questioned her adolescent years. Were those only implanted memories? She was as old as time. What had happened during all those years she could not remember? "I worked as a nurse," Zareena said, and then explained nurses, doctors, and hospitals.

"So you helped sick people," Hannah said. "Just like you will do in Legendary."

"That is my hope," Zareena said. She smiled as she thought about her work and the ladies she used to work with. If they could see her now, they would all be in complete shock. "I had many friends. We talked and shared things."

"You were with a man?" Hannah asked. "Was his offering great?"

Zareena laughed as if the question was the funniest thing she had ever heard. "His offering was small and not worth my time." She laughed again.

"I was in your world once," Hannah said.

Zareena stopped. "Why?"

"I wanted to see if it were better than the dryads' home. So, I left early one morning. By myself."

"To my home?" Zareena asked.

Hannah shook her head. "You do not understand or remember our world very well. We can appear anywhere in your world from ours. I chose the city of Beverly Hills." She fluttered forward.

"And what did you think?" Zareena asked.

"I think you have too many people and too many troubles." Hannah smiled and returned to Zareena's shoulder. "It is why I came back to Legendary. Your world is not a place I want to ever be in again. It would need to change greatly."

Zareena stared at Hannah for a moment and then touched the unicorn horn. She agreed with Hannah's assessment of the world outside Legendary. It did need to change. The people needed to change. "I want to help everyone," Zareena said. "And I want to return to the king. I want to meet him and be sure Legendary is the right place for me. I am not convinced."

They walked in silence for several minutes and then stopped abruptly. The forest in front of them appeared dead and lifeless. Not a place any person or any creature should venture. Three vultures watched from a blackened tree. The vultures showed particular interest in Hannah. Zareena stared at one of the trees and took a step closer. She removed the horn from its sheath.

"Do not step off the path," Hannah said. "The trees are very much alive. I've heard very bad things about the trees and their roots. Only the ogres do not fear the woods around their homes."

"We will stay on the path," Zareena said.

They entered the forest on the path to the purple castle, keeping a watchful eye on the three vultures. Zareena glanced up and then back where they entered the forest. Things were much darker now. Ominous. A foreboding in the air. She wondered if this might well be the end of her journey.

"The witch was right," Zareena said.

"The trees will leave us alone if we stay on the path," Hannah repeated, fright clearly on her face.

Zareena stayed on the path but also watched the dozens of roots moving along the ground, stalking them like long, fat snakes. Branches reached out but didn't dare break the plane of the path.

"Anitha," Zareena said and stopped.

The witch stood between two trees, her face wrinkled, her eyes streaked with red veins, her ears covered in hair. Her black cloak, ripped and raggedy at the hem, dragged the ground. "I warned you," Anitha said. "I said you would not make it to the castle without me. I said you needed me, but you continued on anyway."

"She can't cross the path," Hannah said. "Be gone, witch!"

Anitha's lips turned up in a wicked smile. "Come closer, little one." Anitha stood at the edge of the path, mere feet from Zareena. She didn't dare reach out. "Your kind taste like chicken," she said to Hannah. She patted her shoulder. "Come have a seat." A roach crawled from between Anitha's robe, and she quickly grabbed it and popped the tiny creature into her mouth.

The crunching of the roach made Zareena cringe. She pulled the unicorn horn from her hip and pointed it at Anitha. "I should kill you where you stand."

It was the witch's turn to cower. She moved back and cackled.

"Legendary belongs to me," Anitha bellowed. "I am as old as the land itself. I am as old as the wretched man who claims to be your king." She moved closer again. "Mark my words, would be queen. I will not allow another to rule a land that should belong to me."

Zareena turned when something scraped the path behind them.

"Run," Hannah screamed, and Zareena did.

Hannah leapt from Zareena's shoulder and bolted forward.

Zareena glanced back at the path and the roots that should not have entered the path. "Faster," she screamed at Hannah. She looked again as two telephone pole-sized roots went airborne and prepared to squash the escapees. Zareena screamed and held her arms high to block the oncoming attackers. She fell to the path and curled into a ball, waiting to be flattened, her journey finally coming to a deathly end.

She heard something snap and then heard Hannah calling her name. Zareena opened her eyes to find a large ogre standing over her, a broken root in each hand. She looked for the witch.

"She's gone," Hannah said.

The ogre tossed the roots to the side and offered his hand to Zareena.

Zareena tucked the unicorn horn back into the belt Hannah made and then reached for the ogre's hand. "Thank you."

"Korlor," he said. "The witch has returned at a most opportune time."

Zareena turned to Hannah. "What does he mean?"

Hannah sighed and shot the ogre a frown. "He knows your arrival has brought on the arrival of the witch once again."

Again, Zareena felt responsible for the bad working across Legendary. "I assure you it was never my attention to bring the wicked woman back into this land." She put her hands on her hips. "And I should remind all that I was brought here not knowing of the consequences that would follow." For the second time since stepping into Legendary, she considered returning to her own home.

"You can't go back," Hannah said. "You must bring the king from his stupor. He awaits your arrival. Korlor," she said to

the ogre. “You must tell her!”

“The dryad is right,” Korlor said. “Yes, the witch’s return is because of you. But because of you we will all be set free from the curse that has befallen us. You and only you can do this. Continue on the path, Zareena, and we will all be free.”

“How much further?” Zareena asked. She had not expected this place to be more difficult than the place she left where she was with that horrible man. She put her hands on her hips, rage running through her veins. The witch had placed her with that monster! Because of the witch, she had been beaten and raped and treated like dirt. She looked up at Korlor. “I will not leave this place. I will continue to the purple castle and help all creatures in Legendary.” She moved past Korlor and continued on the path.

They arrived at the ogre village under a starry night. The homes were built into large mounds of dirt. Children played with frogs and lizards, fighting over who got to eat which of the small creatures. Zareena turned away, not wanting to watch the tiny meals. Several fires burned around the village. Around those fires, ogres sat and talked. They ate from large, black cauldrons sitting atop the fires.

“These are your people?” Zareena asked.

Korlor nodded.

The ogre moved away from Zareena and Hannah and stood at the center of the village. “The witch is on the prowl again and is very close.” He pointed at several males. “Go to your guard stations.” He scanned the village. “Sonoma?” he said loudly.

From a dwelling at the far end of the village, a female ogre appeared and stomped toward them. “Yes, Korlor?”

“Have the children taken inside.” He looked around at the fires. “Add logs to the fires. We’ll not give her the cover of darkness.” He turned to Zareena. “You two come with me.”

“Please,” Zareena said.

Korlor stopped. “Please what?”

“Please come with me,” Zareena said.

Hannah fluttered from Zareena’s shoulder and giggled. “She is the future queen.”

Korlor snorted and walked away.

“You shall kick his ass?” Hannah asked.

Zareena stared at the back of Korlor. The cloth covering his behind barely did so. The ogre’s large green muscles and thick neck reminded her of the king’s silhouette. This was when it occurred to her she would have to lay with the large creature, as she had done with Simian, banshee Ursula, Narus, and Tinum.

“He’s a big one,” Hannah whispered. “His offering will be difficult.”

“You would like to join us?”

Hannah laughed, and Korlor looked at them. “I do not wish to die this day,” Hannah whispered. The two chuckled and continued following Korlor.

“You should at least stay and watch. I may need your moral support.”

“I think there is nothing I can do to help you accept such an offering.”

“Then you have no advice, dear one?” Zareena asked.

“I do, my queen. Hold on tight.”

Korlor stopped at his modest dwelling and opened the door.

Zareena studied the door that was made with tree bark and did not completely fill the doorway. She glanced at Hannah, and the two entered.

Zareena had to admit the dwelling was much nicer than anything she had been in since entering Legendary. The walls were painted, the floor lined with smooth planks. A table with two chairs sat in a kitchen area. The kitchen had a wood stove and two cabinets. The living room contained a single couch and an unlit candle. A large king-size bed sat in the far corner. Straw poked from the make-shift mattress. It did not look very comfortable. A large fur covered the mattress.

Korlor sat on the couch, his wide girth leaving little room for Zareena. She sat next to him and felt like a miniature of herself. She glanced at his legs and the cloth covering his offering. Did size matter? She thought so. She stared at the picture of the purple castle on the wall.

“You have met the king?” Zareena asked.

“Yes, before the witch’s curse,” Korlor said. “He has not allowed anyone into the castle in many ages.” He lifted a cup from the table in front of him and took a long drink.

Zareena peeked at Hannah and frowned.

Korlor sat his cup down and leaned back. “You are the queen. You can remove the curse from our king and Legendary.”

“That is what I propose to do,” Zareena said.

Korlor stood and went to the closet near the bed. "Little one, please leave us."

Hannah crossed her arms and gazed at Zareena.

"It is okay, Hannah," Zareena said. "I will call you shortly. Do not stray too far. I do not want the witch tasting you the way she has promised."

Hannah huffed and then nodded. She snarled her lips at Korlor and then exited in an opening in the back door.

"Is it really safe here?" Zareena asked. "The witch's curses cannot be stopped by any creature. Even ogre."

"The village is encircled by locum dust. She will not enter," Korlor said.

Zareena watched the creature, recognizing a phonograph he was retrieving from the closet. He sat it on a nightstand next to the bed. He then pulled a record from the closet. She saw Elvis on the front of the album. Korlor had obviously been to the forbidden land. She made a mental note to see what else he had hidden away in the closet.

Korlor removed the record from the sleeve and placed the record on the phonograph. He cranked the handle on the side, and Elvis's voice played softly through the room. He blew out the candle sitting on the kitchen table and moved to the couch where Zareena sat. "Come with me."

"Please," Zareena said.

Korlor offered Zareena his hand. "Please come with me."

Zareena's hand disappeared in Korlor's large hand, and she followed him to the bed. The ogre was wasting no time. He knew exactly what his role was in the kingdom. Zareena looked into his eyes. "The others have disappeared," she said. "I know not where they have gone."

Korlor place his hand over his chest and laughed heartily. "I assure you, my queen, I am perfectly capable of taking care of myself. And I am here to protect you."

Zareena placed the unicorn horn on the table next to the phonograph. Korlor lifted her from the floor and laid her on the bed. He removed the garment from his waist, and Zareena gasped. She looked at him and then again at his offering. She shook her head and swallowed hard. "I..."

Korlor stepped back. "You are not pleased?"

Zareena stared at his offering and then looked between her legs. She sat up and planted her feet on the floor. Her face was inches from Korlor's offering. She moved her hand beneath the large offering and bounced it in her palm, the heaviest ten pounds she had ever held. Zareena kissed the tip, hoping neither the length nor the width changed. She opened her mouth wider, but Korlor was much too big.

"Do what you must, my queen," Korlor offered. "You are my queen, I your servant."

Zareena moved from the bed, knowing that both Korlor and his offering would destroy her if she allowed him on top of her. "I think it best we switch places, Korlor."

The ogre nodded and laid on the bed, his offering sticking eighteen inches into the air. He turned his head to Zareena. "I cannot make it any smaller." He motioned with his hands. "It is what it is."

Zareena nodded, the anticipation of having such a thing inside her pushing her excitement to euphoric levels. "Lay still, my servant, I shall take all you have. You will have served your queen well." She crawled onto the bed near his spread feet and shook her head as she stared up at his large balls. She rubbed her chin and wondered if she would drown with such a large load deposited inside her.

"I'm sorry, my queen," Korlor said.

Zareena moved forward and draped her legs over Korlor's, straddling him. She lowered over him and stroked his offering, noticing the large vein stretching its length, pulsing in her hand. She lowered the head between her legs and pushed the eye of his storm between her legs, spreading her lips wide apart. She watched with devotion, the up and down motion, the eye disappearing beneath her, then reappearing when she brought the offering back up.

Her hand grew wet as it slid along Korlor's offering, her juices soaking his skin. She reached between her lips and exposed her heated clit. Korlor moaned and shifted his hips. Zareena knew the servant would not last much longer. She rubbed the eye of his monster against her tingling clit and took a deep breath, her arousal dangerously close to sending her over an orgasmic precipice.

Korlor grabbed the sheets when Zareena lifted the head of his offering to her mouth. She licked him hard, paying close attention to the underside, her free hand pumping his large sack. Feeling the rumble in her hand, she lowered him to her lips and again and began to work the large head around her entrance, her hole wet and needy. Her jaws clenched as she moved the behemoth inside her, the head taking several seconds to disappear. Zareena buried her teeth into her bottom lip and held a scream deep within her soul. Her body shook, her mind heading toward delirium. She slid forward, feeling Korlor's mass inching deeper, the width of him agonizingly intense.

Korlor sat up, and Zareena wrapped her legs around his waist, the urgency to come driving her down on the massive offering. She screamed in pleasure and in pain, the piercing sound of her ecstasy filling the small village. Those still outside stopped to listen to the queen's cries into the night.

Korlor leaned Zareena back and took her entire left breast into his mouth, sucking her crazily, Zareena's nipple hard and

lush. He released her breast, leaving it red and swollen and moved to the right, sucking and lapping. He released her, and the swollen nipple matched the other he had assaulted. He drove hard into his queen, her cries raw and tantalizing.

Zareena came, her creamy wetness lubricating Korlor's movements, allowing his mass easy access. She reached between them and held his sack in her hand. She squeezed brutally hard and Korlor growled loudly, his voice shaking the ground. Zareena kept at him, wanting to be filled, the anticipation of such a load pushing her to another climax. She slammed down hard on the ogre, her servant. He growled again, and every muscle in his body tensed and flexed.

Zareena felt the powerful pulsing against her walls. Her hand squeezed again, and she could feel him emptying. She prepared for the deluge, backing away but keeping Korlor inside her. A sudden rush splashed against her insides almost spraying her backward. She held onto Korlor but continued to back away, the onslaught of his liquid offering beginning to pour from her. She remembered what Hannah had said, and she held on tight.

Korlor thrust hard one last time and then pulled out, the pool of his liquid offering spreading beneath Zareena's behind.

The two stared at each other, the servant having done his duty.

Zareena kissed Korlor on the cheek and gathered herself. She slid off the bed, Korlor's liquid offering soaking into her behind and legs. He laid back and Zareena smiled.

Zareena opened the door and stepped outside. Stars twinkled brightly above. Several ogre guards watched her. She sat on a rock in front of a fire that was still blazing, the orange and yellow flames licking at the darkness. She stole a glance at Korlor's dwelling. The soreness would be there for days. She thought about the land of elves and doubted she would be ready for another offering any time soon. Korlor had stretched her in a way she had never experienced. Thinking about the massive ogre, she slipped her fingers between her legs. Three easily slipped inside. She smiled and watched the guards who were watching her. She thought about a train of ogre and then squeezed her legs together. Not a chance. She had done what she had done for a purpose. Give to the land and the land would give back.

Zareena removed her fingers and held her hands out to the fire. Her naked body shivered against the cool breeze passing through the village. She felt sure the witch was out there somewhere, spying her from the forest. Maybe she should go back to Korlor. Make sure he did not disappear like the others. She declined, thinking nothing in this world could harm such a massive creature.

"A blanket, my queen," one of the guards said as he approached. He placed the blanket around Zareena.

"Thank you," she said. When the ogre walked away, Zareena moved to the ground and laid on her side, facing the flames. She tucked her hands between the ground and her face and yawned. Zareena closed her eyes, but sleep was not easy.

Zareena stood on the path less than a hundred yards from the castle gate. She held the unicorn horn in her left hand and peered at the man standing ten feet in front of her, blocking her way.

"Get out of my way," she demanded.

"I didn't tell you that you could leave. I need my dinner cooked and my clothes cleaned." He gazed at her new body, noticing that it had changed. Her breasts were firmer, her skin wrinkle free, a glow around her entire body. But the nastiest thing he saw was in her eyes. They held a happiness he had never seen. He uncrossed his arms and held his hands at his sides, his fists clenched. "Return home and make yourself useful."

"You do not like my world is happier without you?" Zareena paced back and forth along the path, the tip of the unicorn horn at her lips. "I will give you until the count of three to get out of my way."

"Or you'll what?"

"One."

"Don't you make me raise my hand to you, woman. You know what happens when you disobey me."

"Two."

He tilted his head upward and stared down at her, squinting. "You been with another man, haven't you? That's it. You been messing around on me. After all I've done for you. Give you a house. A car. Everything you always wanted. And this is how you show your appreciation." He raised his hand and started forward.

"Three." Zareena slashed the unicorn horn across the man's chest, and he dropped to the path and scurried away. She watched the mouse disappear into the woods, and she giggled.

"Zareena."

She turned toward the castle and found Simian floating before her.

"My queen," he said.

"Where did you disappear to?" Zareena asked.

"Zareena."

"Banshee Ursula," Zareena said, when Ursula appeared from the castle entrance. Narus followed. As did Tinum and then Korlor.

Korlor stepped around the others.

"What's wrong?" Zareena asked.

"There is an imposter in Legendary. Not everyone is who they say. Beware in the land of elves."

Zareena turned to the path behind her, gazing at the land of elves. When she turned, the others were gone.

She continued to the castle and passed through the entrance. The courtyard seemed a bit brighter than her last visit.

The two horses were back, happily eating. They turned and whinnied as she passed.

Zareena stepped inside the building and noticed the walls much brighter, the room lit by a dozen torches. The king sat on his throne, his attention squarely on her. She moved closer, closer than before and stopped. The perversion she saw earlier was almost gone. The king's ears and hair were that of an elf. "My king," she said.

The king stood and approached Zareena. "I am sorry I allowed the witch to send you away so many years ago. My heart has been broken since that day."

"I'm coming for you, my king. I only must travel through the land of the elves."

"Beware of the witch, Zareena. For only the witch can prevent you from fulfilling your destiny. I will await your arrival." He returned to his throne and sat.

Zareena looked around the room as the torches died, and the room grew dark. She backed away from the king and returned to the courtyard.

Outside the castle, she started down the path but stopped when the mouse approached. She looked at the tiny creature and kneeled. "It is not fair what I did to you. I am not the witch but do hope you have learned your lesson. I am not like you. I am better than you, and you no longer control me or my mind. I am my own woman. I am a queen. You are not my king. She tapped the mouse with the unicorn horn, and the mouse became a man.

Zareena stood and scowled at the man. "When you awake from your dreams, I will never have existed in your life," she said. "You will change your ways, and you will never treat another woman the way you treated me. Do you understand?"

"Yes," he said.

"You will become a different man. You will make sure your next wife has a happily ever after." She stepped toward the man. "If you mistreat another being, I will return from Legendary and make sure you regret everything you have ever done to harm another."

"Yes," he said again.

"Leave me," Zareena said.

Zareena passed the man and started toward the land of elves. There she would have to deal with an imposter. There she would have to once again deal with the witch.

"Zareena. Zareena, please wake," Hannah said.

Zareena opened her eyes to find Hannah hovering over her.

"Korlor is gone. The ogre guards have left to search for him."

"I know, dear one. He has disappeared like the other leaders. It is part of my destiny." Zareena moved to her feet and eyed the early morning light in the east. She momentarily thought about her dream and the man she had turned into a mouse. He would never change. Men like him never did. Then she let him go forever. She remembered the king and the way he had changed because of her. She would go to the leader of the elves and complete the king's transformation from what the witch had once created.

"The leaders came to me in my dreams last night," Zareena said to Hannah. "They said there is an imposter in Legendary. That I should beware." She stared at Hannah. The dryad shook her head.

"The imposter is not I, my queen. I assure you."

"I do not believe it to be you, my friend. You could have flown off with the unicorn horn many times, but you did not." From where she sat, Zareena could see the path in the distance leading to the castle. "We should continue our journey."

"My queen."

Zareena turned, glanced at Hannah and then said, "Yes?"

"My name is Geezig. I am leader of the female ogres." She looked around nervously. "I would like to join you as you complete your journey."

"No," Hannah said hastily. "Ogres cannot be trusted."

"Do not be afraid, my friend," Zareena said to Hannah. "Yes, you may join us on our journey."

The ogre smiled, showing green teeth, a bug stuck between two of her lower teeth. "Thank you, my queen. I should take leave momentarily." Geezig hurried off to her dwelling.

"We should not take her along," Hannah said. "What if she is the imposter?"

"Then it is better to keep her close than to let her hide and deceive."

Hannah sighed. "The elves do not like the ogres. They will not allow her in their land."

"They will allow her, or we shall go around the land of elves." Zareena held out her hand, and Hannah took a seat on her palm. "None of us can change what destiny has planned. Legendary must embrace what is coming."

Hannah nodded. "We will all become the same," Hannah said. "We will be like you."

Geezig returned, a small bag slung over her shoulder. "I am prepared."

"Then we should go," Zareena said.

Zareena walked between the guards at the front of the village. Neither guard said a word only bowing to her when she passed. Despite the disappearance of their leader, they knew Zareena's purpose and what it meant for them.

They stepped onto the path which would lead to the land of elves and eventually concluded at the purple castle. Zareena and Geezig walked side-by-side, Hannah sitting on Zareena's shoulder.

Zareena considered who could be the imposter the leaders spoke of. Hannah? The witch? Geezig? She did not believe the ogre was the imposter. She reconsidered Hannah. Maybe Hannah was working with the witch. Though could there be the possibility one of the leaders was the imposter? All of them?

It really did not matter as she still had a journey to complete. She had a people to save and a land and bring back to prominence. "Geezig," Zareena began. "What was your life like before the witch?"

The ogre, cheerful and seeming to not have a care in the world, said, "I was about to marry. My future husband lost his life when the witch put the curse on Legendary."

"We lost many when the witch cast her spell," Hannah said. "That is why we have so much hope in you. We want to return to our lives as they were, though some lives will never be the same."

Zareena remained silent for a long time as they walked, the weight of Legendary on her shoulders. In her old life she would not have had the confidence to complete such a quest or believe that she had such importance. Again, everything had changed. She was no longer a follower.

They approached the land of elves and stopped where the next forest began. The three studied the forest in front of them and then scanned the valley to each side.

"Hannah! Zareena!"

They turned to find Helena flying toward them. "Helena," Zareena said. "Where did you come from?"

"I've been trying to catch up with you for days," Helena said. "I've been worried to death." She scowled at Hannah. "And you, young lady, you're in a lot of trouble with the dryads. You should not have left the dryad forest. It is dangerous in the other lands."

Hannah lifted from Zareena's shoulder. "I am helping with the quest." She moved closer to Helena. "Besides, I am old enough to do as I want." She flapped back to Zareena's shoulder.

Helena's face grew red. "I will deal with you when we return."

"I am not returning," Hannah said. "I made a promise to our queen."

Helena sighed. "I cannot let her go without another dryad."

"You may join our quest," Zareena said. "That has always been the plan. Now we should go."

Helena fluttered to Zareena's other shoulder and sat.

"Geezig, I shall enter the forest first," Zareena said and crossed over into the forest. The trees were large and thick, blotting out the sun overhead. She had expected something different of the elves, a cheerful land where elves danced and sang. Instead, she heard owls and coyotes calling into the gloomy day. Zareena felt sorrow and misery pressing down on her. A thick foreboding filled the air. She stopped. "This place is not right. We should hurry."

A cackle drew their attention to the right. Another cackle made them turn left.

"There's more than one witch," Hannah said in a panic.

"Stay on the path," Zareena said. "She is playing tricks on our ears."

"She will not bother you." The elf belonging to the voice stepped from the darkness ahead. "The land of the elves does not belong to her."

CHAPTER SIX

The Elves

Respen the elf walked next to Zareena, Geezig walked behind with both Hannah and Helena catching a ride on her large shoulders. The elf had probably saved them from another encounter with Anitha, though Zareena had been fully prepared to use the unicorn horn once and for all to make the witch disappear.

“You are the leader of the elves?” Zareena asked Respen.

Respen shook his head. “We are a council of three. They sent me to greet you before you entered our land.”

Zareena stopped and grabbed the elf’s arm. She looked at the others behind her and then at Respen. “The other lands have only a single leader.”

“Everything done in our land is done by a council,” Respen said. “We do not make decisions without the guidance of each other.”

“Then you have three leaders,” Zareena said. In each land she had to only lay with a single leader, though Korlor’s offering could have accounted for a whole tribe of non-ogre leaders. She giggled to herself and then rubbed her chin. She stole a glance at the bulge in Respen’s pants. It was not a large offering, but except for in her dreams she had never lay with three lovers at a single time.

She did find Respen attractive, more attractive than any of the other leaders. His pointy ears poked through long golden hair reaching to his shoulders. The blond locks curled at the ends and seemed to sparkle. The elf stood at Zareena’s height, his body lean. He wore no shoes and wore a bow and arrows on his back. His smile stretched almost the width of his face, and his large eyes reminded her of shiny emeralds. She didn’t know why, but for some reason she shifted her hand into his as they walked. They bumped shoulders as they proceeded, Zareena struggling to take her eyes off Respen’s. She desired to only lay with him and his lovely features. She chided herself for infatuations that made her mind stray from her purpose.

“The elves were the last to be created by the witch’s curse,” Respen said. “We were hill people before and therefore knew where to hide.”

“Like cowards,” Helena said.

Zareena glanced at Helena, the dryad’s comment both surprising and uncalled for. “I find Respen trustworthy,” Zareena said. “I have been warned there is an imposter in Legendary. I have yet to figure out who this imposter is.” She looked at Helena again and saw hurt in her eyes. She felt Helena was not the imposter, her eyes telling a different story.

Respen patted Zareena’s hand. “I assure you, my queen, the land of elves is no home for a wolf in sheep’s clothing. We are a trustworthy people who live to serve the king and his queen, you. Do not listen to the foolish dryad.”

“There are lands beyond the castle?” Zareena asked. Her entourage stopped as if frozen in place.

“We do not speak of the other lands, my queen. Many believe the witch calls the lands beyond her home.” Respen started the small group moving again. His demeanor showed strength and confidence.

“Does anyone venture past the castle?” Zareena asked.

“The king does not allow it,” Respen replied. “There are dangers none wish to encounter.”

The path doglegged to the left, and when they rounded the corner the trees reached up into infinity. Zareena stared upward, the sky completely shut out. Houses built in the trees were connected by walkways made of wood and rope. Elves went about their business without a care in the world.

Respen walked the group to a large tree where a wooden, boulder-sized basket sat attached to rope and pulleys. “My queen,” he said and opened the basket for Zareena to step in. He watched the ogre follow, and he rubbed his chin. He looked skyward and nodded before joining Zareena and the others.

The large basket moved, and they began their ascent.

As they rose, Zareena thought back to each land she had visited and the leaders who had made their offerings so that their king could be freed from his curse. Respen stood in front of her. She hated that the elf would disappear after his offering. But there would be more than Respen disappearing. The entire council would vanish. But where had the others gone? Helena was the first to contact her, bringing her into the forest, knowing Zareena could free Legendary from its curse. Helena had also warned her not to go off alone, to wait and let her lead the way. Hannah had made sure that did not happen. None of the unicorns addressed her. Rein had been the only satyr she spoke with after Tinum. The ogres had watched her suspiciously but none, except Geezig, spoke to her.

“Are you okay, my queen?” Respen asked when the basket stopped.

“Yes,” Zareena said. “We will meet the council now?”

“You must go alone,” Respen said.

“No,” Helena insisted. “It is not safe to be alone with the elves.”

Respen's smile disappeared. "You will do well to hold your tongue, Helena. The dryads' lands are not too far away."

Helena launched from Geezig's shoulder and floated in front of Respen. "Your hollow threats do not scare me, elf. The dryads will protect their lands against any intruders, including the elves."

Zareena stepped between the two, surprised by the dislike. "I will go alone. Helena, please take care of Hannah and Geezig. I will return soon." She addressed Respen, "We may continue."

Helena glared at Respen. Another elf approached.

"Please," Zareena said. "It will be okay." She patted the unicorn horn at her side and nodded at Helena.

"This way, my queen," Respen said. "They will be shown to a guest house."

Zareena nodded to the others and followed Respen across a planked walkway, the others vanishing into the thick fog working its way through the trees. She gently chewed her bottom lip as she followed Respen, knowing she would have to take the offerings of the entire council to free the king.

They stopped at a large dwelling built into a tree, the tree as wide as a house. Several torches lit the entrance. Zareena looked around but saw no other elves.

"You know what you must do?" Respen asked. He blocked the entrance. The torches made his face glow red and orange.

Zareena frowned. "I do. And I do not need to be reminded of my duties."

"My apologies, my queen." Respen stepped aside and held out his hand for Zareena to enter.

Zareena walked in and waited for Respen. Two other elves sat around a table, staring at her. She looked around the room and took note of the contraption hanging from the ceiling. A paddle lay on a table against the far wall. Several candles were burning around the room, two on the table with the paddle. A glass container sat next to the candles, the clear liquid inside the container had bubbles around the top.

She ignored the two elves and approached the harness. She held the glass container and the way the liquid moved she guessed it to be some kind of oil. The paddle was heavy, the end wide, large enough for a single butt cheek. Paddling was something she heard the nurses at work talk about but not something she had ever experienced. Why suffer the pain? She dipped her finger into the candle wax and watched it harden around her nail. Her eyes shifted to the elves.

Their intent was perfectly clear. They wanted more than to make a simple offering. Helena had said the elves were dangerous. Maybe. Or maybe Zareena was the dangerous one. She would let them have their way to start, then she would make things interesting. They would have to please their queen or suffer the consequences of being a failure to king, queen, and Legendary.

The two elves at the table stood and crossed the room, meeting Respen in front of the harness. "My queen understands this is the final land on her journey before entering the castle," Respen said. He unclipped several straps on the harness. "The elves do things differently than those in the other lands. We hope you do not mind."

"I understand my destiny," she said. "My reward is much greater than yours." She stepped back between the foot straps and sat on the dangling swing. She grabbed ahold of the ropes hanging from the ceiling. "Continue and be prepared, Respen. All is not what it seems."

Respen stepped between the other two elves. He placed his hand on the shoulder of the elf on his right. "This is Kellam, my queen." He turned to the other elf. "And this is Eliam. Both are members of the council."

"Remove your clothing, and let me see your offerings," Zareena said. She reached to her side to ensure the unicorn horn was still with her. She believed they meant her no harm, but she could not forget the warning she received in her dreams last evening. She observed the three elves intently, planning her own assault if it became necessary.

Respen and the other two elves removed their clothing, leaving Zareena mildly impressed. After Korlor, nothing could ever come close to impressing her.

Respen nodded to the elves and each moved to a foot strap. They raised Zareena's feet and gently secured them in the harness. Respen moved to Zareena's head and slowly lowered her neck into another strap hanging from the ceiling.

Zareena stared at the ceiling, her heart beating faster, adrenaline a raging river through her body. The contraption had looked extremely uncomfortable, but once they had her strapped in, she relaxed and felt at home, though she took nothing for granted.

Respen moved to the small table and took the glass jar. He popped open the top and met Zareena's eyes. "Xenack juice, my queen. Produced from a flower only grown in this land."

"Do what you may," Zareena said. "My king awaits me."

Respen held the bottle over Zareena's breasts and poured a line of xenack juice from between her breasts to between her legs. Small streams raced down her sides. A small stream ran over her clitoris, between her legs, and between her cheeks. Respen nodded at the other elves, and the three placed their hands on Zareena. The sensation of so many hands reminded her of the evening the dryads had touched her. She closed her eyes and let her mind travel to where it may.

Zareena writhed beneath the six hands, fingers sliding easily over her skin and through the xenack. Her skin tingled, awakened by the heavenly feeling of hands fondling her body. Her breasts heaved when Respen's hands encompassed her nipples, stretching the succulent knobs, releasing and then pulling again. The swing rocked as she squirmed, her hips driving

upward, hoping to find a hand to please the growing need between her legs. She regretted this land would be the last as her experiences had been so different between the creatures. She recalled her dream of Tinum, Simian, Narus and Mr. Brown. Where in the dream could she have possibly placed the three elves. What possibly could she have done to accept so many offerings?

A set of hands dove between her legs, separating her juicy folds, her clit throbbing and in great need. Fingers entered her softly, the xenack juice lubricating and titillating. The first two fingers swirled around her opening, spreading and preparing her. Another finger plunged inside, the three tips voraciously digging at the spongy skin just beneath her engorged bud. Respen grabbed her breasts again, squeezing until Zareena moaned with pleasure. A fourth finger slipped inside, and the wave of a first orgasm rushed forward, splashing violently over the elf's hand and arm.

The fingers worked her harder, the urge in her soul encouraging the frenzied expulsion of juices.

Kellam, the elf between her legs, jerked his hand from within, allowing Zareena's spray to fill the air.

Zareena rasped and struggled to fill her lungs with air.

Respen pulled on a rope near Zareena's head and the harness rose. He tugged another rope and the elves turned her over, her body facing the floor, her behind exposed. Respen grabbed the paddle and knelt in front of his queen.

Zareena made eye contact, her mind wandering between ecstasy and reality. "Spank me," she whispered. "I want to feel the pain."

"I assure you, my queen, I will be gentle," Respen said. "But I also assure you that you will feel the pain you so seek."

Zareena shook her head, the strap beneath her neck almost cutting off her air. "Do not be gentle, my servant. Serve your queen as she requests or been seen as a failure amongst the people of Legendary." She closed her eyes and floated toward darkness, preparing her body for what must come.

Respen moved to his queen's buttock and ran his slick fingers between her cheeks, pausing to slip his finger into her. Zareena neither moved nor uttered a word. Respen motioned at the other elves who moved to the head of the swing, their offerings hard and engorged with excitement.

Zareena saw the two elves but did not react. They were but servants to her. She spied Respen and saw the paddle high in the air.

"The first is for the dryads," Respen said. He brought the paddle down and the slap against wet skin sounded like a whip cracking in the air. He held the paddle against her bottom and awaited a response.

Zareena tensed, the barbarous act tugging at an internal darkness she had no idea existed. She opened her eyes and saw the elf offerings dangling before her face. She knew they would not force themselves into her mouth. She remained their queen despite her current position.

"The second is for banshee Ursula," Respen called out. The second smack was a bit harder than the first, causing Zareena to wince.

Zareena clinched her bottom and took a deep breath. Her cheeks burned, but the pain quickly elapsed. A finger entered her again, driving a bit deeper, searching. She pushed back on the finger, daring the intruder. The finger pulled away, disappointing her. She shook her bottom, defying her assaulter. Respen would neither break her nor own her.

"The third is for the unicorns," Respen said. He brought the paddle down harder, and the harness swayed, the slap echoing throughout the room.

Zareena clenched her jaws and let the pain settle. The finger entered her again, the knuckle gyrating around her tight hole, the xenack juice allowing her to be stretched pain-free. She looked up at the two offerings. "Move closer, servants," she ordered. "Give the queen your offerings."

The elves did as instructed and moved forward, guiding their offerings into Zareena's mouth. Zareena took the offerings and closed her mouth around the elves. She looked up in their surprised eyes.

"The fourth is for the satyrs," Respen said. The two elves watched in fright as the paddle came down against Zareena's behind.

She fought the need to clench her teeth in pain. Zareena sucked on the two elves, moaning as the finger plunged inside her once again. At one time in her life she thought such lewdness was abominable and impious. But no longer. She felt empowered, in control, nobody's tool for their own pleasure. She could stop the elves at any point, and they would bow before her. Though they were her servants, she did not claim to own them. But more importantly she was not owned.

The swing started moving, the elves moving in and out of her mouth each of their small heads pressing against her wet cheeks. The finger still worked inside her, stroking, stirring a darkness in her soul. When the finger escaped, she knew it was time.

"The fifth is for Korlor and the ogre clan," Respen said. The smack was loud and painful. Zareena cried out between the offerings in her mouth. As soon as the stinging wore off, she composed herself and used her free hands to grab the two offerings in her mouth. She rubbed the elf balls, kneading and squeezing, pumping furiously. The elves came quickly and then tried to pull away, but Zareena held firmly. With an offering in each hand, she pulled hard, extracting more elf juices, each elf's head thrown back, their eyes closed tightly, their bodies wavering. They came again, and Zareena released them. The two elves

stumbled back and collapsed against the wall, falling over each other, their offerings against one another in a small x.

Respen adjusted the harness and turned Zareena back over, the spankings for each land except his complete. He sat on the floor, his face between Zareena's legs, inches away from her vivid wetness. His warm breath accosted her, and for a moment he seemed unsure of his next move. She had beat the elf at his own game, a game she had not yet agreed completed.

Zareena reached up and grabbed the harness so that she was in a sitting position. She placed her hands around the elf's ears and brought his face forward, burying him against her. The elf's long nose shoved against her juicy clit, and she moaned with ecstatic pleasure. She moved his head side-to-side. Respen struggled to breathe but did not stop pleasuring the queen. Her body quivered and then began to shake violently, the elf's face still buried between her legs. Her hips bucked forward, paused, pulled back, and thrust forward again against Respen's face.

Respen's face sloshed through the fury of Zareena's release, her offering to him. He struggled to breathe and struggled to regain control. His eyes showed a lost soul, a male creature who did not understand the power of a great woman.

Zareena released the elf's head, and he fell back onto the floor, his eyes wandering somewhere else in the universe, his face glistening, his lungs gasping for air. The elf looked pathetic, his confidence washed away in Zareena's juices.

She reached forward and unstrapped her feet, releasing the strap around her neck and chest. She stood and stepped forward, standing over the breathing but lifeless Respen. The paddle lay next to him. Her bottom stung, but the feeling of being paddled released a dour and treacherous dam inside her. Enlivened, she moved away from the elf and then glanced at the other elves who she had laid waste to. She grabbed the unicorn horn and studied the phallic-like object. It had brought the satyrs back to life. Had energized her body in a way that made her see the world much differently. She thought about the world she had left a few days ago, where humans ruled and destroyed lands. Where humans harmed each other and all God's creatures. Was her only destiny to change Legendary? And what would become of Legendary once the changed had been delivered? She had done what she must for king and country, though she felt no kinship with either.

Zareena moved back to Respen and knelt next to him. She wondered what kind of power she really held in her hand. The witch certainly cared about the power it controlled. She closed her eyes and brought an image to the front of her mind. A man. Tall and muscular. Hair as golden as a sunrise, eyes greener than the deepest colored emerald. When she opened her eyes, she ran the tip of the horn across Respen's chest. The elf shook as if having a seizure, and his body morphed.

Zareena stood and stepped away from the mighty man she had created. "Wake, my lovely," she said.

The man opened his eyes and stared at Zareena. "My queen," Respen said. He moved to his elbows and his eyes grew wide. "What has happened to me?"

"You are a man now, Respen. Stand and prepare to serve your queen." Zareena left Respen and went to the other elves who were still unconscious against the wall. Once again, she closed her eyes and imagined two strong men. She ran the unicorn horn across their chests, and each changed. "Wake," she said, "and serve your queen."

Kellam opened his eyes and appeared to be in a panic. His large man body full of muscles, his offering larger than it had been. Eliam opened his eyes and then stood, his large, dark body lean and muscular. He flexed his arms and proudly smiled.

"What are my queen's wishes?" Eliam asked.

"We will find the others and bring our journey to a close at the castle," Zareena said.

The elves followed Zareena outside and across the bridge connecting one treehouse to the next. She entered the home and crossed her arms as she watched the resting Geezig, Hannah, and Helena. They would each be perfect for what she had planned.

"Wake, servants," Zareena said. "We must go." She approached the three females who watched her suspiciously. "It is time for your transformations." She closed her eyes and imagined what Hannah might look like as a human. She then opened her eyes and placed the tip of the unicorn horn between Hannah's bare breasts. The dryad watched with great anticipation and held Zareena's stare.

Hannah dropped to the floor and writhed, balling into a fetal position like an unborn child. Her body grew, her legs long and sexy, her face beautiful, hair red and touching her lower back. She twisted and looked at her back, her wings still there only larger. She flapped the large wings, and a breeze crossed the room.

"You are still beautiful, my love," Zareena said and kissed Hannah, sliding her fingers through Hannah's hair. The kiss was long and deep and when the two parted they gazed into each other's eyes. "As I imagined, you are most beautiful."

"You are next," she said to Helena.

Hannah moved to the side, and Helena floated forward.

"The horn has great power," Zareena said. "I will use it wisely. I will use it in all worlds." She closed her eyes and pictured Helena as human. She saw a tall woman with black hair and dark eyes. She saw milky skin and voluptuous breasts. She saw a caring face but also a powerful demeanor. Zareena opened her eyes and placed the tip of the horn between Helena's breasts. The dryad dropped to the ground and changed quickly, her naked form delicious and appetizing. She stood and faced Zareena. Though Helena appeared older than Hannah, their beauties were both great and similar.

"My queen," Helena said.

The two women kissed and hugged. Helena's beauty breathtaking, sultry, and hypnotic.

“Geezig,” Zareena said. Geezig was of course beautiful in her own way, though all the ogres were large and muscular with large heads and wide necks.

Geezig approached, her eyes lowered. “My queen.”

Zareena closed her eyes and saw Geezig as a human. She saw a tall redhead with freckled cheeks and soft, comforting eyes. She saw a curvaceous body with bowing hips and strong, firm legs. She saw a beautiful and vulnerable woman. “Are you ready?” Zareena asked.

Geezig nodded and closed her eyes.

Zareena placed the unicorn horn against Geezig’s chest, and the ogre dropped to the floor. The transformation took longer than the others, but the change in the creature had been dramatic. She stood and looked down into Zareena’s eyes. The women embraced but shared nothing else.

Zareena had spent the last several days forgoing clothes. The others would have to do the same.

They descended in the basket and started toward the path to the purple castle. Zareena walked alone in front, the others, including an imposter, followed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Purple Castle

Zareena remained quiet. Anticipation moved each foot forward. She had taken the offerings from the elves thus completing the king's transformation. She had no idea what he now looked like, or if the transformation had really finished. Regardless, she felt assured she had done all things possible to help the people of Legendary.

She was also quite surprised the witch had not made an appearance. The witch did not seem like the type to give up. Which meant she had something else in mind. She looked at the others, hoping for some hint of who might be the imposter. Geezig had been unsure of her own transformation, seeming to hesitate when embracing her final transformation. But to what purpose would Geezig be disloyal?

Zareena raised the unicorn horn and turned it left and right. The power seemed to be limitless in Legendary. And what if she had the horn outside Legendary? The human race had gone and made a mess of the world. Life had become complicated because of hate, poverty, technology and greed. People no longer respected others. Family killed family. Mass shootings killed whoever happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Political systems were corrupt, and overpopulation was wreaking havoc on food supplies and overall making the planet more and more uninhabitable for future generations. She eyed the horn again and then stuffed it into the sheath Hannah had created. The power to change both worlds lay in her hands.

"You're excited?" Hannah asked as she caught up and walked next to Zareena. "I would be. You will change the world and keep us in harmony for eternity."

"Tell me something," Zareena whispered. "Are you the imposter?"

"Surely you do not think that of me, my queen," Hannah said sadly.

"So then you would follow me to the ends of the world?" Zareena asked.

"Of course, my queen. I would give my life for you. Should there be any doubt?" Hannah slipped her arm around Zareena's arm. Her wings flapped and brushed against Zareena. "May I ask a question of you, my queen?"

"You may," Zareena said. "Anything you like."

Hannah checked to see if the others were too close. "I would like to lay with you. Like the others have done."

Zareena smiled and held Hannah's hand, their fingers intertwined, shoulders rubbing together. "That day will come, my lovely. Everyone will have a chance to serve their queen. Especially you."

"You steal all the queen's time from the rest of us," Helena said and moved to Zareena's other side. Hannah fell back in line.

Zareena once again took notice of Helena's tragic beauty. Something in the woman's eyes made her uneasy. The uneasiness had not been there at first. It had not come until she suddenly emerged from the forest. "I'm pleased with your transformation," Zareena said. "A queen needs a trustworthy servant, someone to advise her and talk in a way not always pleasing. I would like that to be you."

"My queen, you know it is I who should be your council. I am the wisest in all the land. I know and understand its history. I know of the others. They, like you, trust me."

Zareena held Helena's hand and pulled her close as they walked. "Then you are not the imposter of whom I should be afraid?"

"Of course I am not," Helena insisted. "I would die for my queen. I am the only one in Legendary who can advise you on its people and history."

"You steal precious time with our queen, Helena," Respen said and joined them as they walked.

"It is just like an elf to interrupt," Helena said angrily and joined the others.

"She does not care for you," Zareena said. She glanced down Respen's new body and felt a craving between her legs. His offering flapped from leg to leg as he walked, her eyes bouncing along with it. She hooked her arm around his large forearm. She squeezed and the muscle tensed. She had created a masterpiece. It was good practice for what she had planned.

"She believes the elves are untrustworthy, though we have never done anything to the dryads," Respen said. "Our land is closest to the king. It does not sit well with the dryads."

"She would then believe you are the imposter the other leaders spoke of," Zareena said. "And since you did not disappear like the other leaders, I might be skeptical with her. You are obviously different than the others."

"I cannot explain to you why I am still present," Respen replied. "But I can assure you I am not the imposter of whom you speak. When you were ensnared in the harness, I could have done away with you myself. The horn for which you hold so dear could have been mine. But instead of being disloyal, I did what was required of me."

Zareena stopped. "And I assure you, elf, I would have stopped you. Do not pretend to have done me a favor, Respen." She

began the path again but not before eyeing the other two elves. "And you speak for Kellam and Eliam?" Zareena asked.

"I do, my queen."

Zareena looked to see if Geezig was working her way forward, hoping the woman would interrupt Respen. She needed a break from the self-absorbed elf. Instead, Geezig walked behind the others.

"Your allegiance is to the king and I?" Zareena asked.

"Of course," Respen said. "I am no different than any other citizen of Legendary. We all want to see the land return to what it once was."

"You may return to the others," Zareena said, tired of him and his lies. She believed nothing he said.

Respen dropped back, and Zareena walked alone. Trust was a fragile thing to have, Zareena knew. But living without trust was not the life she ever wanted to choose. Her life had seen its share of disloyalty. It had experienced its share of disappointments. She understood when the time came, the culprit would rear its ugly head. As long as she was still in possession of the unicorn horn, she felt safe.

Zareena looked up from her thoughts and found the purple castle sitting on the hill in front of her. The castle looked exactly as it had in her dreams. The walls were indeed purple, the spires much darker but purple still. The flags showed a purple coat of arms she had not seen in her dreams. A white unicorn, reared on its back hoofs, stood in the middle of the design. She gazed at the majestic building. She had finally come to the end of her destiny, or so those around her believed.

"We are ready," Helena said. "We are by your side."

Zareena made her way along the rest of the path and passed through the open gates with six naked servants, one of whom she thought an imposter. Respen seemed to be the obvious choice, so obvious she thought it could be the wrong choice.

The courtyard was just as she remembered from her dreams. The two horses ate from a large clump of hay, each stopping to watch Zareena. She stopped at the well in the middle of the courtyard and brought the bucket up from within. She tasted the fresh water and took a deep breath, watching the next entrance, torches burning on the inside. Time stood still for no person, destiny would not be delayed. She lowered the bucket and stood. Her servants fell in line behind her. The king would have to take her as is, a confident, powerful woman. She would not be subservient. She would not be a mouse.

Zareena placed one foot in front of the other and followed the purple bricks leading to the entrance. The moment she stepped inside, the torches turned purple. She looked at the others standing at the entrance.

"You may join me," Zareena said. They followed tentatively, glancing at each other as if they believed they were walking on forbidden ground. "The kingdom I share with our king will be the kingdom we share equally. I am your queen, not your god."

Zareena followed the hallway, the path much longer than in her dreams. Would everything, including the king, be different from her dreams. It did not matter, her purpose clear.

She entered the next room with the six still following her. A dozen purple oil lamps lit the room. The king sat on a dark-purple throne, wearing a purple robe and nothing else. Zareena approached and bowed. He turned his head to the left, and this was when Zareena saw his elf ears. She turned to question Respen, but he was no more. The imposter off to hide.

The king stood and stepped down from his throne. Zareena turned toward the man in front of her, the king she would marry. "You did not lay with the elf leader," he said. "My curse remains."

Zareena let her mind travel back to her interaction with the elves and realized she had not taken Respen's offering. He had tricked her, made her give him her offering. He had never entered her other than his tongue. Her chin went to her chest. She had been sure Geezig was the imposter. But no, Respen had shown his true colors.

The king held out his hand. He did not speak, his eyes cold and dark.

Zareena removed the horn from the sheath and started to hand the horn to her king. "I failed you, my king. I should go back to my home outside Legendary."

"This is true," he said. "You should return and never let your face be seen in Legendary again. You have failed not just the king but also the people." He motioned toward those behind her. "Including those who followed you on your journey. You are a failure in everyone's eyes." He moved his hand closer to her. "The horn, and then be on your way." The king twitched and scratched at the back of his neck. "The horn, Zareena. It will fix what you have broken. It will right your wrongs."

Zareena moved away and quickly hid the horn behind her back. "I broke nothing. This is not the fault of mine. You were unable to protect Legendary, and look what happened to its people. A real king would have defended his people." She scowled and glared at the king. "Do not lecture me, you abomination!"

The king moved toward Zareena to take the horn but did not move quick enough. Geezig stepped between them, her large breasts bouncing the king backward. "You dare touch our queen?"

Hannah and Helena moved forward and joined Geezig.

"You will not harm the queen!" Helena demanded

The king's jaws clenched, and he backed away, returning to his purple throne. He twitched again this time more violently.

Zareena stepped between her protectors. "This is not the king," she said. "The imposter is the king and those who would follow him!"

The king's eyes grew wide and red and furious. He cackled and grabbed the arms of the throne, his fingernails cracking and then stretching. Snot ran from his nose and the bridge bowed, the tip stretching.

"Zareena!" Hannah said.

Zareena stepped back.

The king writhed, and his skin began to peel. He stood and breasts grew on his chest, old and wrinkly and sagging. His offering dropped to the floor and shriveled, replaced by a dark and gaunt slit. Black, wiry hair grew over the thin opening and then turned gray. Several hairs dropped to the floor.

The witch held up her arms and cackled, the cackle turning to a deep laugh as she lowered her eyes to Zareena.

From behind the throne the five of them appeared. First Simian, his large erection still pointing to the sky. He ignored Zareena but watched the three women next to her.

"I should have known," Helena said. "It is why you always left. To be with the witch."

"Helena?" Simian asked, confused.

"You are not worthy to be a dryad," Hannah said. Shocked, Simian stared at her. "It is us, you traitor."

Simian floated next to the witch. "She still has the horn," he said. He turned to Zareena. "Change me if you are not willing to give Anitha the horn."

"I will die a thousand deaths before I will ever change you," Zareena said. "Like I, you have filled your destiny. Be gone!"

Tinum appeared from behind the throne, stopping on the other side of the queen. He said nothing. Did nothing.

"I saved your people," Zareena said. "And this is how to repay me for my kindness? Do not ask me to change you. You shall stay a nasty animal for eternity."

"She has the horn," Tinum said. "We agreed."

Anitha fidgeted and glanced at the horn in Zareena's hand.

"Why did none of you just take the horn from me? And where is the real king?" Zareena asked. "I should change you all into a mouse and let the birds of the sky hunt you down and rip you apart."

"My queen," Korlor said as he appeared.

"I am not your queen," Zareena said.

"Korlor," Geezig said and stepped forward. She raised her hand to Korlor's face and gently stroked his cheek. "Why have you done this?"

Korlor placed his hand against Geezig's and pressed it gently against his face. "Anitha threatened to destroy the ogres if I did not help her. She said Zareena would relinquish the horn. Then she would change us, give us charge of Legendary, second only to her. I did it for you and our people, Geezig."

"No, Korlor, you did it for you," Geezig said. She removed her hand from his cheek, lowered her head, and stepped back, tears filling her eyes. "We were to be married," she said to Zareena.

"Where are the others?" Zareena asked.

Respen entered the room and joined the witch. "My queen," he said.

"Why did you not make your offering to me?" Zareena asked.

The witch cackled. "Because he is an impotent pig," Anitha said. "He was unable to give you that which is required."

"The other two elves?"

Anitha glared at Respen. "Fool. I told you that would not work."

"Ursula," Zareena called.

Ursula appeared from a dark corner of the room. "My queen."

"You said that you loved me. This is how you show your love?" Zareena asked. "By betraying me? What did this filthy woman offer you that is so great?"

"To return me to my home. Away from Legendary. I feared your love would be no more once you found the king."

"The witch has made each of you a promise, a promise she cannot keep. You have sealed your own fates," Zareena said.

Hannah moved forward and whispered in Zareena's ear. "Where is Narus?"

Zareena sighed. She did not want it to be true. The horn had brought her great pleasure. It had saved and changed her life. But it had also shown the darker side of people. It was an object of much desire. "Narus, show yourself, you traitor." She looked around the room and then found the witch smirking. Zareena immediately knew. Narus had wanted no part of Anitha's plan.

"Narus is no more," Anitha said. "And you are no doubt outnumbered, queen." She reached out. "Now relinquish that which is rightfully mine."

"Answer me. Why did you not take it for yourself? Why did you not trick Narus?"

"Like the sword Excalibur, only the chosen one may wield the horn of a unicorn. And only Narus' horn held the power to change Legendary," Anitha said.

"I am sorry, my queen, I did not know the witch's plan for you when I brought you back into our land," Helena said. "It is I who failed Legendary."

“None of you could take Narus’ horn,” Zareena said. “So you tricked me into deceiving him.”

Hannah wrapped her arm around Zareena’s. “Narus freely gave his horn to you,” she said. “He told me he did not want it to fall into the hands of these heathens.” She scowled at the witch and her followers. “As long as you are in this land, Anitha will pursue the horn.”

Zareena held up the horn and pointed it at Anitha. “You will cause trouble no more.” Zareena lunged forward and drove the horn through Anitha’s chest, piercing her heart. The others quickly moved away, shocked at the actions of their queen. She quickly pulled back on the horn, and the witch dropped to the floor.

Anitha writhed and convulsed across the floor, a trail of blood following her. Zareena followed with deadly intentions. When the witch stopped moving, Zareena drove the horn through her left eye, removed the horn, and then drove the horn through her right eye. Death could not come soon enough for the wicked creature.

Zareena looked around the room at the others watching her. “Helena.”

Helena crossed the room. The witch lay dead at her feet. “Yes, my queen?”

“Do you know the way back to my land? I would like to return immediately.”

“But Legendary?” Helena asked.

“Legendary belongs to the people. I will change them back. They will need to choose a new king and queen.” She pointed at the five who had betrayed her and Legendary. “They should not be allowed to rule this land.” She waved the horn in their direction and each found themselves bound. “Hannah. Return to each of the lands and bring everyone to the castle. Let them know urgency is needed. Geezig, you and Helena will stay by my side.”

Purple oil lamps lit up the castle and the night sky. Zareena sat in the courtyard by the well. Geezig and Helena were inside, watching over the five bound creatures. She held the unicorn horn in her hands. It had not changed into a phallus in quite some time.

She understood Legendary to be her original home, but something pulled at her. Something from the home she left days ago. If the horn could change Legendary, could it change the home she left? Of course it could.

The captives revealed the king had died some time ago. The witch had come into Zareena’s dreams and created lies, making her, and others, believe the king still lived. Simian, Tinum, and banshee Ursula made regular visits to the castle to give it the appearance of occupancy. The witch had indeed become the queen of Legendary, but she had also become greedy. She wanted the unicorn horn to conquer other lands, including the land from which Zareena came. Her revenge was directed at whatever creator had placed her here. But in the end, she had been the one to fail.

“You are returning to your home?” Helena asked and sat next to Zareena. The woman’s beauty continued to dazzle Zareena.

“I am. I want to change it. Make it a better place to live.”

Helena placed her hand on Zareena’s. “My queen, the magic has never been used outside Legendary. What you seek you may not find.”

“There are many troubles in my land,” Zareena said. “All across my world. I must try.” She turned to face Helena. “I will ask the people of Legendary to work together and choose a new king and queen.”

“We will go with you,” Helena said. “Hannah, Geezig, and myself. Regardless where you venture, you are still our queen.”

“Then I shall take you with me.” She looked past Helena and into the building where the throne sat empty. “The banshee Ursula. Please bring her to me.”

“Yes, my queen.”

Helena turned to leave, but Zareena grabbed her arm and stood. “I am sorry for not trusting you, Helena. I do desire you be my trusted advisor.”

“Many misled you, my queen. I cannot fault you for your actions.” Helena left to retrieve Ursula, leaving Zareena alone once more.

A plan had formed in Zareena’s mind. She would need leaders. Strong leaders to help the people of the newly formed land. She understood she could not change her entire world when she returned. Changes had to be slow and done in increments. A world created within a world like the way Legendary was created. But she needed much help, including help from those who turned against her. She still trusted Ursula. The banshee had expressed her love. Zareena still believed in that love.

“My queen,” Helena said.

Helena stood next to Ursula. Ursula’s hands were still bound.

“Release her,” Zareena said.

“But, my queen,” Helena said.

Zareena nodded. “It is okay, Helena. And please leave us for a moment.” When Helena walked away, Zareena placed

the unicorn horn on the well next to her. "You said you love me."

"I do, my queen."

"Yet you betrayed me. Did you not?"

"I am guilty and ashamed, my queen."

"You understand you must be punished?"

"I must," Ursula said stoically.

Zareena stood, happy Ursula had not lunged for the unicorn horn. "Place your hands on the lips of the well, banshee Ursula."

Ursula did as she was told, her behind high in the air. She spread her feet and tensed.

Zareena took the horn in her right hand and then lifted Ursula's cloak, revealing her bare behind. She closed her eyes and as they opened, the horn transformed into a paddle. Respen's strokes against her bare bottom had been painful yet beautifully dark. The pain lasted only moments, the pleasure a lifetime.

Zareena moved behind Ursula and held the paddle high. "I am your queen," she said.

"You are," Ursula replied. "I am yours to use."

Zareena brought the paddle down against Ursula's bottom, the faint smack barely making Ursula move.

"My queen, may I have another at your hands?"

Zareena raised the paddle again. The second whack echoed throughout the castle. Ursula whimpered, pleasing Zareena.

"Again, my queen."

"You will follow me into my land?" Zareena asked. She brought the paddle down again, and this time Ursula cried out into the night. Two large cherry-like welts appeared on Ursula's cheeks.

"I will follow you to the depths of Hades if it so pleases the queen," Ursula said. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "It would please my queen to give me another?"

Zareena grabbed the end of Ursula's cloak and covered her bottom. "I will take you into my land, and you will be one of my leaders. I will give you your own land and your own people, and you shall be by my side."

"Yes, my queen."

"You will have your own harem of your choosing, man or woman," Zareena said.

"I will do what pleases you, my queen."

"You may return and find your sleep," Zareena said. "Do not cross me again, Ursula."

Ursula stood and turned. She and Zareena stared into one another's eyes, an understanding passing between them.

Zareena placed her hand around Ursula's waist and pulled her in. The two kissed as deeply as they had in the woods. "I trust what you say," Zareena said when the kiss broke.

"I will not disappoint you again," Ursula said and walked away.

Geezig stepped from the building and joined Zareena. "What is your plan for Korlor and the others, my queen?"

"If I leave them behind, they will retake their leadership," Zareena said.

"They became greedy on empty promises," Geezig said.

"You would have me free them?"

"I can only tell you I believe Korlor when he says he is sorry for betraying you and the people of Legendary. I know not what the others will do."

"You will join me in my land?" Zareena asked.

"I will."

"You would like to take Korlor with you?"

"I would, my queen."

"You will marry him?"

"Yes, my queen."

"Bring him to me," Zareena said. "We must not delay."

Geezig returned to the building and came back moments later with the bound Korlor.

"Your binds," Zareena said. "Break them."

Korlor flexed his arms, and the binds easily broke.

"You could have escaped long ago, but you did not."

"I'm sorry for my betrayal, my queen."

Zareena motioned toward Geezig. "You wish to marry Geezig?"

"I do, my queen."

"Take her hand, and I will bring you together."

Korlor held Geezig's human hand. Zareena ran the unicorn horn across his chest. He fell to the ground still holding Geezig's hand. When he opened his eyes, his human hand was in hers.

"You will follow me into my land and lead by my side?" Zareena asked.

Korlor stood, towering over the two women. His blond hair reached to his shoulders. He was no longer ugly and green, but he had retained his massive muscles and large offering. The two women glanced between his legs and then at each other.

"You are my queen and I shall protect you with my life." Korlor moved to one knee and bowed his head. He stood and took Geezig's hand. "It is time to marry."

Zareena blessed Geezig and Korlor's union and sent them on their way, Korlor's hand on Geezig's behind as they disappeared inside.

Zareena had five leaders who would follow her back home. Once they arrived, each would be given their own land to rule in a way that pleased their queen. She considered Tinum, Respen, and Simian, but felt the three could not be trusted. Even Helena had said not to trust Simian.

As much as she disliked the three creatures, they had opened up a world of possibilities to her. She thoroughly enjoyed the bit of kink Respen had introduced to her. Never would she have thought being paddled would invoke such sexual awareness and want. What else was out there in the world to satisfy her sexual curiosity? She thought about the ladies from work and all the stories they had shared, including the ones she had used when masturbating at home. She began to reconsider her plans for home. The interference it would cause so many. Her plans included doing away with much of the human race. But then there were those she wanted to keep around. Maybe the ladies at work could be on her council.

A scream from inside startled Zareena and she withdrew the unicorn horn. But Geezig's screams were of pleasure not pain. Until almost dawn, Korlor gave Geezig his offering, the two wailing like animals.

Zareena fell fast asleep just before the morning sun lit the eastern horizon.

"You coming back to me, baby?"

"I am. And I'm bringing friends. Just for you."

"You went and got kinky while you were gone."

"I did. You wouldn't believe the things I did and the things I learned and the things I want to do. A whole new world opened to me, and you get to be the very first to benefit from my newfound skills. Just you and me."

"I like the way you're talking, baby."

"You have no idea. And I have a special toy. It's going to change our lives forever. Not just you and me, I'm talking the entire world."

"We should go ahead and get started. See what I got for you, baby? Remember how you like it. All rough and tumble. How you like when I give it to you when you're on your belly? Remember?"

"I do sweetie. Oh ... I ... do. I remember everythingggggg you ever did to me."

Zareena smiled in her sleep and turned on her side.

"You have done well, my queen."

"Narus?"

"Yes, Zareena."

"I'm sorry."

"No, my queen, do not be. You followed your destiny. I was an important part of your destiny. I am fine. You are going to return home?"

"I am going to make things better."

"You are going for revenge as well?"

"I am."

"The power you carry, Zareena. Use only for good. Else you become the same as Anitha."

"My queen."

Zareena opened her eyes and shielded them from the morning sun. "Hannah. You have returned already?" She stood and realized she had fallen asleep next to the well. Helena, Geezig, and Korlor joined them. Zareena watched the building, waiting. "Ursula?"

The others shrugged.

"We thought she was out here with you," Helena said.

Zareena turned to the castle entrance where dozens of voices fought for supremacy.

"They are all here," Hannah said. "All of Legendary."

"Have them wait a moment," Zareena said. She left the well and entered the building.

Zareena entered the room behind the throne where Tinum, Simian, and Respen sat bound and immobile.

"Here to free us?" Respen asked.

"Where did she go? The banshee?"

When the three returned a blank look, Zareena knew they had nothing. “I’m going to leave Legendary. I’m returning to my own land.”

“Legendary is your land,” Simian said.

“Not any longer. You can have it back.” She glared at the three creatures and withdrew the horn. “I should end your lives for what you did to Legendary. You betrayed your own people. But I will allow Legendary to decide your fates. Goodbye, and may we never cross paths again.”

In her dream, Narus had spoken of revenge and about using the horn for the wrong reasons. She would follow his guidance and only use its power for good. She ignored the desire to kill the three sitting on the floor.

Zareena entered the throne room and looked down at her naked body. She could not return to her land with no clothes. But she could also not return home the way she was before she left. She closed her eyes and imagined the most beautiful white gown. She opened her eyes and twirled on her heels, holding out the long hem of the dress.

She stepped from the building leading to the courtyard and found every creature bowing.

“Please stand,” Zareena said. Again, she looked for the banshee. Hannah, Helena, and Geezig joined her. Korlor stood with the others, waiting. She approached the large group of creatures and asked them to close their eyes. When they complied, Zareena drove the end of the unicorn horn into the ground.

Each creature dropped to the ground and shook as they changed. The ground rumbled and then one by one they stood, their bodies anew. Men and women and children. All human. All like Zareena.

“I am leaving for my land,” Zareena announced. Mumbles of disbelief worked through the people of Legendary. “You will choose your new king and queen.” She paused and made eye contact with as many as she could. “Korlor?”

“Yes, my queen?” Korlor approached and bowed.

“You know the way back to my land?”

“I do, my queen.”

“You will remain for a few days and ensure Legendary’s leaders were selected. You will also take care of the other problem.” Zareena passed the crowd of Legendary citizens and exited the castle, Hannah, Helena, and Geezig following. Her white satin gown and long dark hair floated in the wind. Free of Legendary, Zareena and the others followed Helena off the path and into the woods on the way to the other world.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Return Home

Thirty feet into the woods, the skies overhead grew dark and gloomy. The journey home, although short according to Helena, was going to be chilling. Chilling because of the unknown awaiting.

Zareena had a plan, of course. The world had grown complacent with itself. She hated the technology, the conveniences, and the entitlement. The world needed to be different. Her world needed to be different. No more Starbucks. No more Walmart. No more Amazon. The last made her giggle because without Amazon there probably would not have been so many visits from Mr. Brown. But maybe she had a plan for Mr. Brown as well. Regardless, however she went about changing her own personal world it had to be better than it was before.

Her decision was made. She would create her own world within the world around her. Where everyone lived in harmony, a sexual utopia similar to the sixties she had read so much about. She would call the new world The Divine. The Divine would be divided into five realms, each realm led by Hannah, Helena, Geezig and Korlor, and herself.

There was a problem, however. Ursula had once again disappeared, leaving a land without a leader. Zareena hoped Ursula's reason for vanishing was not disloyalty. It could have been Ursula enjoyed paddling so much that she wanted it again. Zareena thought of the power she had over Ursula each time the paddle slammed against her bottom. It had not just made Ursula wet with excitement, but Zareena as well. She remembered seeing the glistening hairs between Ursula's legs when she bent over, the way her lips pushed together and squeezed between her legs.

"Are you sure you wish to return?" Helena asked. "When I first found you, you were heavy with sadness. None of us want you to feel that sadness again."

"I will not allow it to happen, Helena. Everything will change when we arrive." Zareena thought for a moment and then held Helena's hand. "What do you think happened to Ursula? I cannot believe she went against my wishes."

"I think you care too much for the banshee," Helena said. "She is one of a kind. An outsider to Legendary. All of Legendary had been weary of the her. Now you know why."

"She expressed her love and loyalty to me," Zareena said. "I believed her. I still do."

"My queen," Hannah said, and they stopped.

Zareena's heart sank as she stared up at the white, stucco house. From the back, she could see into the kitchen and right then she could see the man standing by the kitchen sink which looked out over the backyard. He did not see her. She kept her heart from sinking. That Zareena no longer existed. He stood in a world belonging to her now.

"I need to do this alone," Zareena said. She turned to the others. "You will wait for me here."

"You cannot," Geezig said. "We will protect you from him."

Zareena felt at her hip, making sure the unicorn horn was still present. "No, I have to do this on my own. It is the only way for me to move forward. My destiny did not end in Legendary. It was only a stop along my journey. This is my destiny. This is the reason my journey has brought me back."

"We shall wait in the woods," Helena said.

"We cannot," Geezig said. Tears welled in her eyes. "We promised our loyalty."

Zareena placed her hand on Geezig's shoulder. "Return to the woods and rest. I have work to do. I do not doubt your loyalty."

Zareena, still in her white satin gown, her hair moving gently in the wind, walked across the backyard and up the porch steps. The outside of the house still needed to be cleaned and the plants around the outside still needed to be tended to. Now it was for her to do. She grasped the door knob and entered the place she hated more than anything else in the world.

It took him several seconds to realize she stood in the kitchen. Long enough for the dislike of him to consume her soul. He turned off the water and leaned against the sink. His eyes burned, and a rage worked across his face.

"Where the fuck have you been?" He snarled the corner of his mouth. "And what the fuck do you have on?"

"I am your queen," Zareena said. "I suggest you bow before me."

His face shifted from rage to surprise. "What the hell did you just say? Bow before you?" He crossed his arms. "You bow before me instead."

Zareena shook her head. "You do not understand how things have changed."

"Why're you talking funny? You go and get stupid on me?" He laughed at his own joke. "Tell you what I'm about to do," he said and began unbuckling his belt. He unzipped his pants, his chest puffed out as if he were something a woman desired. "I'm going to bend your ass over this table and give you what you've been missing. How does that sound to the queen?"

Zareena laughed. "What you have is nothing compared to what I have had." She pointed toward the front door. "I will give you only one chance. Walk out now and you walk away with what little dignity you have left. This is now my castle."

“Your castle? What the fuck is wrong with you. Do you know who you’re talking to?”

“In this world you are called an asshole. In my new world you will be but a mouse. At the bottom of the food chain.” She smiled and crossed her arms. “I will even give you until the count of three. You can count that high, correct?” She lowered her arms.

He pushed his pants to the floor and stepped to the side. “You’ve never had anything as good as me, Zareena. And you know it. And when I’m done with you, you’ll never be able to walk again.”

“One.”

“I’m going to stick it in your ass, where you hate it.”

Zareena laughed out loud and turned. She raised her gown and showed her bare behind. Each cheek red from the paddling she had taken at the hand of Respen. “There is nothing you can ever do for me. Two.”

“Fuck this, I’m taking what’s mine!” He pulled off his underwear, his dick hard and small. He moved relatively quick but of course not quick enough.

Zareena withdrew the unicorn horn like a gunslinger in the old west. She moved to the side at the last second and he missed wildly. When he composed himself, Zareena motioned between his legs with her eyes.

He looked down and then looked up at Zareena. “The fuck!”

“Not anymore,” Zareena said.

He screamed at the top of his lungs and rubbed the place where his dick at once been. He found the small hole with his finger. “I’ll fucking kill you!”

The backdoor flew open and the kitchen filled with beautiful women.

“My queen,” Geezig said.

“He is a man no more,” Zareena said. “You have yet one more chance to leave.”

“He has no offering,” Hannah quipped.

Dickless rage poured through him. He grabbed a knife from the counter and charged.

Zareena waved the unicorn horn through the air, and the man who had abused her for too many years squeaked and scrambled out the back door, heading toward the woods where many a bird were looking to feast on a mouse.

None ever spoke of the man-mouse again.

Hannah closed the back door and gazed at the kitchen. She opened the refrigerator and gasped, covering her mouth with her hand. Helena opened cabinets, Geezig played with the faucet.

“It will all be gone soon,” Zareena said.

“But it is all so useful,” Helena said. “You do not have to walk to the stream. The stream is brought to you.”

Hannah disappeared down the hallway and screamed. From her knees, she looked back at the others and then dipped her hand in the toilet. “There’s more!”

Zareena reached out and stopped Hannah’s hand before it got to her mouth. She waved the horn at the toilet and it vanished.

“We have many things to discuss.” She brought them to the living room which looked toward the road in front of the house. They watched in awe when vehicles passed by. Zareena explained what she had planned and why she had brought the four back with her. She assured Geezig that Korlor would soon be joining.

They talked for several hours, agreeing with Zareena on what must be done with the world Zareena considered creating. Though Zareena ruled as queen, they all had a say in how the new world progressed. Zareena wanted no secrets amongst the leaders. They discussed realms and laughed over glasses of wine Zareena introduced. Hannah quickly became drunk, stumbling over her words. Zareena thought of the ladies from work and then watched the ladies in her living room. Things had come full circle.

As daylight began to wane, Zareena showed them the house and where they would all sleep for the evening. Tomorrow would bring a new day and a new world.

Hannah and Helena shared the master bedroom, Geezig took the spare bedroom. Zareena had no desire to be in any room in the house and preferred to sleep outside in the backyard.

She turned off the lights in the living room and noticed the brown box truck pulling into the drive way. Mr. Brown stepped from the driver side and made his way toward the front door. Zareena’s heart beat faster, a familiar urge rising between her legs. The doorbell rang, and she opened the door, Mr. Brown exactly as she remembered him.

“Sorry to deliver so late,” Mr. Brown said. “Traffic was killer today.” He stared at her white gown and then looked into her eyes, lost and having trouble finding words. He handed her the box in his hands and started to turn away.

“Wait,” Zareena said. She remembered the seed of the idea that developed days ago. She glanced up the stairs to make sure the others had not been disturbed. “Would you like to come in?”

“Your husband?”

Zareena smiled. “He left me.” She frowned.

“Let me lock the truck,” he said and returned to his vehicle.

Zareena waved the horn, and her satin gown disappeared. She relaxed on the couch, one foot on the floor, one leg stretched out across the couch. Seeing Mr. Brown had made her instantly horny. She watched him pass the front window on his way back. He stepped in and closed the door, stopping dead in his tracks when he saw her on the couch.

“Don’t be shy,” Zareena said. “Bring your queen your offering.”

Mr. Brown moved to the couch and then moved to his knees. “Yes, my queen.”

His tongue worked its magic, and as Zareena wafted away into a fantasy she had formed long ago, she saw Narus land on the front lawn, a large horn protruding from his forehead, and large wings protruding from his sides. Zareena winked at the creature, and the creature winked back.

Zareena came.

Mr. Brown made his offering.

Then the world changed with the simple wave of a unicorn horn.

Zareena had truly found her destiny and had truly found her king.

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